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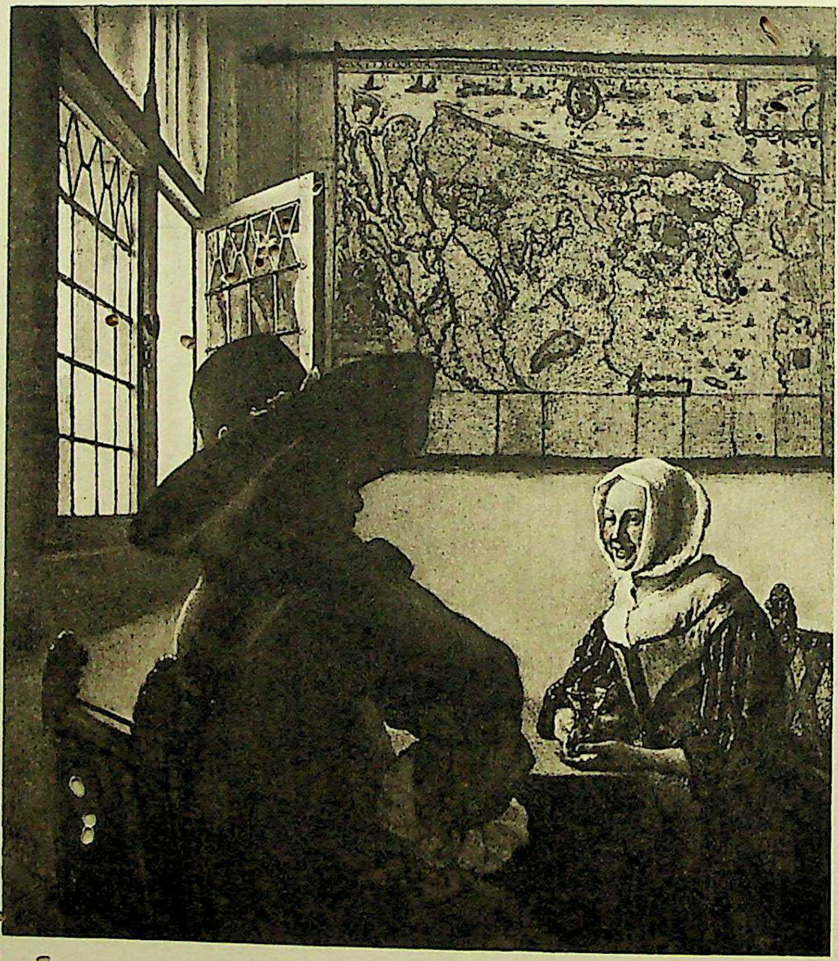

SOLDIER & LAUGHING GIRL

From the painting by Vermeer. *New York.*

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ONE HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF PAINTING

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

R. C. WITT

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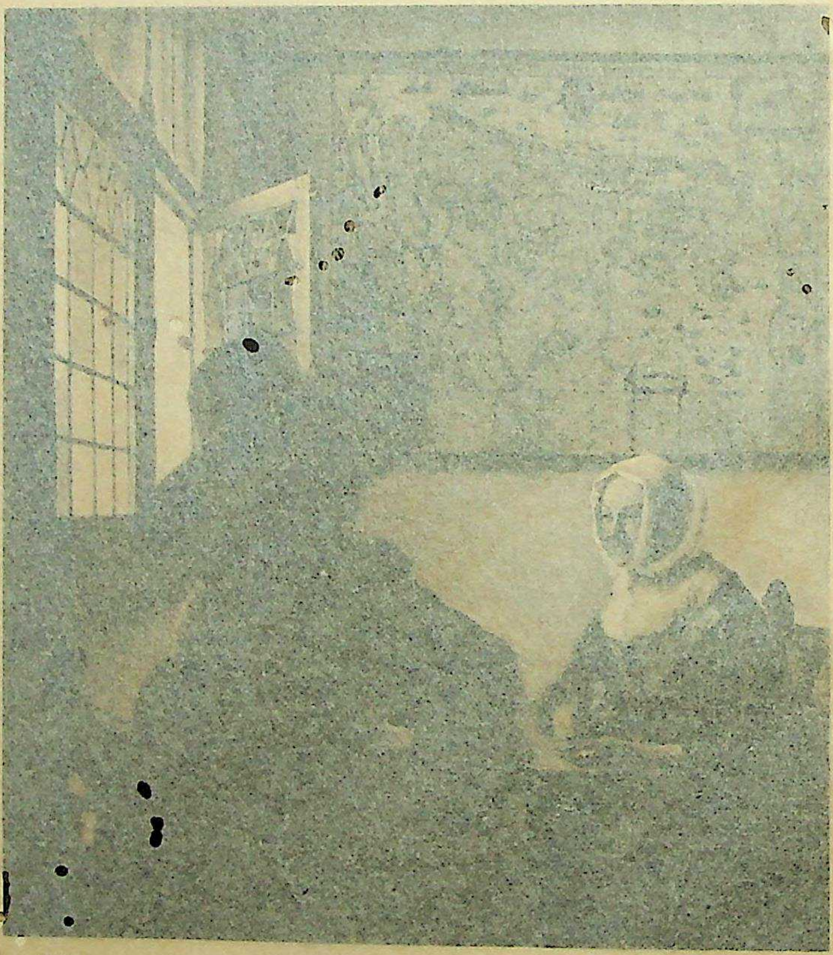

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"Mal fai se taldi, e peggio è si tu riprendi la cosa, quando bene tu nolla 'ntendi."

"You do ill if you praise, still worse if you censure, in a matter you do not understand."

LEONARDO DA VINCI, *Cod. Atlant. fol.* 76, *verso a.*

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A HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF PAINTING

INTRODUCTION

I

ANTHOLOGIES, whether of verse or prose, pictures or sculpture, have always been the despair of the compiler, sometimes too of the reader. The reason is not far to seek. From their very nature they must needs partake of the spirit of compromise, with all its attendant disadvantages and restrictions. If we had but ourselves to collect for, the difficulty would not arise. Most of us carry in the Golden Treasury of our own minds the selection of poems or pictures which have made their special appeal to our temperaments. These may change from year to year, they must change if we are growing. We may weed out from our old loves and add some that be new. But at least for each individual his choice is completely satisfying. It has been made indeed from the whole range of his knowledge, to meet his particular desires, and this being so it were strange if it failed to please.

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But when the selection is for others doubts inevitably arise. The necessary limitation of numbers is sufficiently formidable when the immense range of choice is considered. The personal element again counts for much, perhaps more in painting than in most branches of art. One man's Salon Carré may be another's Chamber of Horrors. The inclusion of a single infidel in the fold goes far to spoil the pleasant communion of the faithful. Even the compiler is but human and cannot help owning to his fair proportion of likes and dislikes, sympathies and antipathies, even prejudices maybe, however much he may endeavour to keep them in the background.

One difficulty in the selection demands a word, that imposed by the limitations of reproduction in black and white. Even the finest renderings in colour, though improved almost beyond belief, still leave much to be desired, and none of the available processes have been adopted. Beauty of colour, therefore—one of the mightiest instruments of the painter's art—is thrown aside. An attempt may indeed be made before some pictures to hint at how much is thus lost, but to evoke a vision of colour by mere words is to strain unduly the resources of literature. Allowance too must always be made for the absence in the most brilliant reproduction of some of those mysteries of light and shade, some of the more delicate harmonies of glazing, and many of those qualities of pure paint which are glories peculiar to the art of painting. In the same way, too, the inevitable reduction in scale involved in reproductions of portable size necessitates a corresponding loss of effect, which is especially noticeable in the case of the largest pictures.

But apart from the personal point of view and the question of reproduction, there are many considerations to be taken into account when the final choice comes to be made. What is to entitle a picture to admission into this Century of Painting? It cannot be fame alone, for fame like fortune is proverbially fickle, and some of the best known works of art owe their reputation to the accident of an accident. To be reputed a worker of miracles, to be snatched from the burning, to be stolen and recovered by the police—any one of these may make a first-rate reputation for a second-rate work of art. The world will crowd to admire a picture with perfect impartiality either because it is immensely large or absurdly small, because it has cost an enormous sum or been acquired for a few shillings from the dustman. If, morever, it has been painted, as *Vathek* is said to have been written, at a single sitting, or, on the other hand, has occupied the best years of a man's life, it will have irresistible claims to popular favour. Fashion too plays a villain's part in public estimation. Many a picture and painter have their day and cease to be, and the wonder is how they could ever have commanded universal homage and admiration. In days when heroic art alone was considered worthy of entering the artistic Holy of Holies, would any anthologist have dared or even desired to omit Raphael's "Transfiguration" or to include Angelico's "Coronation of the Virgin" (Pl. 2). Moreover everything from a great master's hand, and much from the hands of pupils masquerading as

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his, is too often accepted as the last word in art. Pictures are judged by the labels on their frames, and stand or fall accordingly.

It is inevitable, therefore, that any selection of a Hundred Masterpieces must be an arbitrary one. But granting this, are there any tests that may be applied before admission? What is a Masterpiece? Unfortunately, to define is almost as difficult as to create it. No one has yet achieved a wholly satisfactory definition of Beauty. Selection inevitably implies comparison, while in a sense of course all comparison between pictures of different ages and schools is impossible. There is no absolute standard against which they can be set, and there is therefore no proper basis for comparison. Who would wish to pronounce whether Watteau's "Cythera" (Pl. 80) is superior or inferior to Titian's "Entombment" (Pl. 42) or the "Tapestry-Weavers" of Velazquez (Pl. 59). It is enough to ask the question to reveal its absurdity. Even when we compare works much closer to one another, as for instance a landscape by Rubens with one by Rembrandt or Ruisdael, the answer will be little more satisfactory. To recognize our preferences is not always to be able to explain or justify them.

Yet there are a large number of pictures which a general consensus of educated opinion over a period so long as to make it independent of fashion or other extraneous considerations has placed unreservedly in the first rank. These Masterpieces of painting are of all schools and of many centuries. As far as the old masters are concerned, they have stood the test of time, and the chief difficulty is one of selection. As regards modern pictures, their long probation and trial lies yet before them, and only the future can decide whether they will be found worthy to rank with their great ancestors. But all in the fulness of time have won or must win their way to recognition on their own merits, and because of the beauty that is in them.

This beauty may take many forms. There is a beauty of the sun and of the moon. A picture may charm by its appeal to the imagination, or by its deep underlying sense of truth to what we know, or by its happy combination of fact and fiction. It may delight by its force or subtlety of line as by its glory or delicacy of colour. It may give us all the glamour of high romance, suggesting great achievement and ultimate triumph, or it may touch our sympathies, sometimes even our sentiment, by its feeling for the homely ways of humble life. Or again, it may win whole-hearted admiration by the perfection of its technique, its rendering of texture and surface, its mastery of light and shade, its dexterous manifestation of the finest qualities of paint. Some or other of these characteristics it must possess. Many of them it will combine. Yet analyse as we may, the result can never be a formula. It will be something indefinable, something fugitive, something that can be realized more profoundly at one time than another, according as we are ourselves attuned to it. There are no water-tight compartments into which the essential virtues of a Masterpiece can be distributed. It must stand or fall as a unity complete in itself.

As far as possible the principle of selection has been to choose from admitted Masterpieces those pictures which either on their own intrinsic merits justify their inclusion; or seemed suitable as representing periods or schools which could hardly be omitted. The object in view has been, therefore, to make the selection as catholic and representative as possible within the limits laid down. Every school of importance is represented—Italian, Flemish, Dutch, German, French, Spanish and English, and every century from the fourteenth to the twentieth. Examples of religious and historical art, of landscape and seascape, portraiture, genre and still-life are included. Both public and private collections have been freely drawn upon. For in a compilation such as this the distinction between pictures to look at and pictures to live with is more than ever fallacious. Generally the point of view taken is rather that of the connoisseur than of the collector. A great museum that collects rightly includes specimens of all masters, even those of the second and third ranks,—not only the Masterpieces of a few. But the distinction exists for all that.

Again, no picture has been rejected on the ground that it is hackneyed. A picture does not cease to be a Masterpiece when universally recognized as one, any more than it becomes one by reason of such recognition. Familiarity is indeed a stumbling-block in the way. All that has been said about a work of art tends to become in the minds of many all that can be said. For most of us familiarity blunts the keenness of vision and stales the freshness of appreciation. We feel we should appraise these pictures even higher if we could see them again for the first time. The eye seems to take so much for granted and to be disinclined to trouble about the rest with which it is at least half familiar. Herein lies the magic of the true Masterpiece. On closer study we come to realize how little we have actually seen of all it has to offer. However old, it holds the secret of perpetual youth. The supreme test is its power to retain our admiration, our interest, where others fail to do so.

It cannot be hoped that the selection will correspond with that which every reader would have made for himself. The most that can be expected is that a large proportion of the pictures chosen will be common to each of them. For the sins of omission which are obvious no apology is necessary. It would have been easy to select another Century of Masterpieces from the compiler's private *Salon des Refusés* alone. Many undoubtedly great pictures are excluded for the excellent reason that, fortunately for us, the world's Masterpieces of painting largely exceed a hundred. As regards sins of commission, for the impenitent to affect contrition would be rank hypocrisy. No picture has been admitted which, given sympathy with the time and circumstances in which it was produced, is unworthy to rank as a Masterpiece.

II

To such general considerations must be added others more particularly applicable to the pictures themselves. Pictures of all times have been chosen because, whatever differences may exist on the vexed question of progress in art, there can be no doubt as to its continuity. The fallacy of treating old masters and moderns as if they were different in kind as well as date does indeed die hard, like its corollary that any old picture is almost necessarily a fine picture, while of a modern painting unfortunately the presumption seems to be all the other way. But the new school of to-day becomes the old tradition of to-morrow. Modern pictures are but old masters in the making, good and bad like their predecessors, and time will sift out what shall endure.

There are certain broad distinctions, it is true, between the achievements of the old schools and those of our own time, but they are based at least as much on what each wished to accomplish as on its manner of setting out to do it. Speaking broadly, for there were many brilliant exceptions, the aims of early art were more limited, its subjects a few only, repeated again and again in different forms. The earliest painters selected more critically. Avoiding or neglecting certain aspects of nature, certain incidents or scenes from everyday life, not necessarily because they felt their inability to render them, they preferred to choose their subjects, and selection implies limitation. In this sense the earliest masters were indeed limited. They accepted, too, conventions of treatment and handling, conventions often of great beauty, but conventions nevertheless. They affected tones either gay and shadowless, or enveloped in glowing or dusky harmonies unknown to nature. They were but little concerned with exact imitation, or with recording their impressions of the ever-changing face of the earth. Beauty of surface and texture they prized highly as qualities peculiar and essential to the art of painting.

Modern art, on the other hand, knows no limitations at least of what it may attempt. The modern painter claims mastery over the whole world of form. Even of unpromising materials he essays to make a picture, creating, he contends, a beauty of his own, which is really independent of, though perhaps latent in, the objects before him. We have indeed touched the other extreme. To avoid is to fear, and greatly daring we attempt everything in paint. Is it because to the modern painter every subject is equally beautiful that to the spectator his renderings of it are too often equally ugly? For no subject is too unfamiliar, no impression too momentary for his ambition. It does not follow, however, that all subjects are equally paintable in the sense that all are equally worth painting. Modern art often concerns itself, therefore, with what to the old masters would have seemed trivial and uninteresting. Where it accepts conventions at all it is under protest. Nature's mysteries, her moods, the delicate shades of expression peculiar to season and hour, which must be watched with unremitting attention, are to the modern painter as it were the breath of his nostrils. To secure them he will readily condone a tortured surface or an entire absence of colour harmonies.

As for so-called progress in art, it is at least not measurable in commonly accepted terms. Every school, every age, almost we might say every individual has contributed something, but the product of the last is not the sum-total of all that has gone before. The discovery of every age has been original, peculiar to itself. Every great innovator, van Eyck, Giorgione, Rembrandt, Rubens, Velazquez, has created a new world of forms or a new method

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of presenting them. Each discovery of new artistic possibilities, it is true, must to some extent influence those who come after; but influence is a subtle force, not to be confounded with imitation. Imitation is conscious, direct, a clumsy attempt to conceal the barrenness of the artist's mind. It can be recognized afar off in some dexterous combination of borrowed forms and motives. Eclectics there have been in all ages, men who deliberately sought to combine the salient qualities of others in their own productions. But no work, however accomplished, can combine in itself all excellences. Just before the last one can be added it ceases to possess any.

In a collection of pictures derived from many ages and not a few countries a great variety of subject must be expected. Religious themes inevitably bulk somewhat largely where the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been drawn upon. Only in Dutch and English painting is this class of subject unusual, for reasons chiefly historical, it is true, but also to some extent temperamental. Religious subjects do not necessarily constitute religious art. Titian's "Daughter of Herodias" (Pl. 40) is no more a religious picture than Palma's "Meeting of Jacob and Rachel" (Pl. 44). Quentin Matsys's "Madonna" in Berlin (Pl. 27) is as mundane as Reynolds's "Duchess of Devonshire and her Daughter" (Pl. 85). In the great pictures painted as altar-pieces there is inevitably something formal, something monumental and unchanging, just as in many prayers and liturgies words and phrases are deliberately repeated and become embodied in traditional forms of expression which their users learn to associate with certain moods and emotions. So too these great altar-pieces came to be used where we should employ a tablet or stained-glass window to commemorate the pious munificence of some family or individual, or to win favour in this world with those who claim to have influence in the next.

Subjects drawn from the literature and mythology of Greece and Rome, too, have appealed to the imagination of artists of all times, but especially to the men of the Renaissance, as a newly discovered toy cupboard delights a nursery of unspoiled children. As subjects for the painter's brush, Venus and Pan, Bacchus and Ariadne, gave to the imaginative artist the opportunity of re-creating gods and goddesses in man's own image, yet surpassing in beauty anything that poor mortals had ever known. Their artistic relationship with the heroes of the Christian religion is of the closest. St. Sebastian is own brother to Apollo, the Magdalen sister to Venus. Botticelli and Correggio did not scruple to paint Venus and Madonna from the same model. As art became independent of the Church and emancipated from its patronage, painters grew bolder, and the gods and demigods of antiquity lived again in their own proper persons.

If religious subjects predominate among pictures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when we come to a later period landscape art seems to come to its own. But before it gained an independent position it had served a long apprenticeship in the shops of the Church painters, supplying scenery for the principal actors or playing the still humbler rôle of a decorative adjunct. We could ill afford to lose the delightful glimpses of clear blue sky and bright

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green meadow that we find in Memlinc and Angelico, or the spacious country into which Hubert van Eyck and Perugino are wont to lead us, enhancing an effect or evoking a mood. But gradually and inevitably even the face of the earth began to appeal to painters as a subject to be presented for its own sake. Claude and Rubens, Ruisdael and the van de Veldes found each his own way of expressing that aspect of nature which especially interested him. These earlier landscape painters adopted either the deep golden tones which came down as a legacy from the Venetians, or cool silver harmonies more in keeping with their northern skies, though their lighting is often arbitrary and artificial. It was left for the modern artist to explore more deeply, to express more intimately all that he found. The discovery of the nineteenth century, it has been said, was the discovery of colour values due to the subtle and scrupulous analysis of light. Full sunshine effects, the problems of conflicting lights, the hour that trembles between day and night, night itself in all its gradations of darkness—to render these were the tasks that Constable, Corot and Whistler set themselves and accomplished.

While landscape pure and simple is a comparatively recent development, portraits, on the other hand, figure throughout the whole period covered by this anthology. Schools, styles, fashions may change, but human vanity remains. It is as old as art itself. Every one is capable of being painted, and if the result be not satisfactory surely the fault must lie with the painter. He has for his material the human head, at its best a superb piece of modelling. On it may be concentrated all the observation, the discernment of which the painter is capable. Many a painter, indeed, only comes to greatness when he is face to face with his sitter. The heroic or bombastic conceptions which weary us so greatly in certain historical painters are forgotten when the artist confronts his portrait model. The painter's method of approaching his portrait may indeed vary infinitely. His aim may not go beyond a presentment of the outer man. Or he may reach further and seek to interpret to the world the soul within. It may perhaps be said that such portraits as Hals's "Portrait of a Man" (Pl. 66), Rubens's "Helena Fourment" (Pl. 52), and David's "Madame Récamier" (Pl. 82) make their appeal from without. On the other hand, Mona Lisa, with her unknown depths of universal experience (Pl. 18), Charles v, broken under his ceaseless struggle (Pl. 43), and Rembrandt's short-lived son, Titus (Pl. 71), surely speak to us from within, expressing the mystery the tragedy and the pathos of life.

Genre painting, like landscape, first became of importance in the seventeenth century. As a class it has been undeservedly under a cloud, especially with the fiercely artistic. Historical genre is still suffering from its vogue in the eighteenth century, just as anecdotal genre sums up all that was most Philistine in the nineteenth; for in both the subject itself was the chief concern of artist and public. Hence its futility and tedious commonplace. It was illustrative, and nothing more. But in the hands of the great Dutchmen it was a different matter altogether. Here treatment was more considered than the story. The

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painters of domestic life discovered and revealed all the interest, even the romance, with which the everyday world is filled. Life has its valleys as well as its heights, and there is room for both in art.

Still-life is really a branch of genre painting. The French expression *Nature morte* is peculiarly misleading. Even inanimate objects must have life on canvas, though they may well be at rest, and the art of still-life painting is to render this life by play of light and shadow, by the skill with which reflected surfaces carry the eye from object to object, and the lines of the composition bring together into an ordered whole the trifles assembled for the purpose. Every bowl or bottle, fruit or flower, must be brought into relation and harmony, like people in a group.

For indeed the supreme test of mastery lies in the painting, not in the thing painted. And here individuality comes in, in defiance of tradition, influence and all the levelling factors that count for so much. It is a truism that no two painters in exactly the same circumstances will paint the same subject in the same way. Whatever likeness there may be is that of their school and age, and, as in the case of a resemblance between brothers and sisters, is partly a matter of unconscious imitation. The difference is that of the painter's *ego*. Even in portraiture, where at first sight it would appear that there could be little scope for variety of treatment, a glance at the portraits brought together here will prove the contrary. Strange as it may seem, the sitter himself often plays a smaller part in the portrait than the artist, for the artist can degrade Apollo and ennoble Caliban. By the portrait painter the question of likeness indeed cannot be

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overlooked. With Holbein and Dürer we feel it to have been of the first importance. With others like Van Dyck and Gainsborough the artist's own personality, working as it were on the basis of an ideal type ever present at the back of his mind, tends to obscure and generalize all but the most strongly marked characteristics of his sitters. Some sacrifice of likeness there may be in the cause of beauty or pictorial effect. It is whispered that Reynolds had a whole room full of "rejected addresses," returned by indignant sitters who could not recognize themselves. Their annoyance was perfectly justified if, as was likely, it was above all a counterfeit presentment of themselves they sought, the illusion of a moment rather than a work of art based upon such physical features, personality and character as they might possess. The power to catch a mere likeness is often but a trick of mediocrity. The result may be seen in many a house. Our ancestors stare at us from our walls, but alas! few of them speak. Their silence is the price we pay for what we are pleased to call truth to nature.

The perennial antithesis between imagination and truth, again, is largely a matter of temperament. Broadly speaking, indeed, certain ages and schools have shown a greater leaning towards the one quality than the other, just as some schools have been more engrossed by colour than by form. The relations between imagination and truth are indeed not antagonistic. In a sense they are partners, each in turn claiming precedence. Never can they be wholly independent, and the undue predominance of either inevitably results in monstrosity or inanity. Imagina-

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tion run riot may be as nauseous and commonplace as the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Yet the distinction is a real one, and, under the banners of those ugly twin-sister terms Idealism and Realism, battles have raged ever since prehistoric man first felt the artistic impulse stirring within him. These qualities themselves have little or nothing to do with the subject. A purely imaginative theme may be treated without a spark of imagination. Even the Judgment of Paris in the hands of a mid-Victorian Academician would become commonplace, while such a commonplace subject as a cook pouring milk from a jug at a kitchen table may be endowed by a Vermeer with something of imaginative beauty (Pl. 73). For all that, some subjects do lend themselves more readily to the predominance of truth or of imagination. Portrait painting perhaps, as we have seen, calls for a greater measure of truth, while from their very nature religious subjects contain in themselves something of the emotional and mystic, and thus make a special claim upon the painter's imagination and his sense of the poetic and supernatural.

III

It is in the very nature of an anthology that each unit should be chosen for its own sake. In a collection of pictures the company thus brought together must of necessity be somewhat cosmopolitan. No guest in such a gathering is included simply as the friend of some one present. He must deserve his invitation on his merits. But once the company is assembled it is the duty of the host so to order his party that each one finds his friends and that none is left out in the cold. Thus when the choice of the pictures has been made and their qualifications considered, the question of their arrangement to best advantage has to be faced. The natural system of dealing with the pictures of each school in turn has obvious advantages, but at the same time serious drawbacks. It tends above all to encourage the prevailing tendency to group works of art according to political or geographical circumstances. On broad lines there is considerable justification for such a method, and in the past political conditions acting through religious beliefs really governed the character of artistic endeavour. But all this has long been changed, and the old distinctions are becoming less and less intelligible to modern ideas. At the same time, greater interest is now felt in the work of contemporaries scattered over the face of many countries, and working either in ignorance of each other's production or under the subtle influence of some mysterious sympathy, such as seems to have brought the artistic achievements of countries so far removed as Italy, Persia and China to their highest perfection simultaneously in the sixteenth century. But chronology, though a good servant, is a bad master, and no system can be rigidly adhered to. Generally speaking it will be found that an arrangement bringing those together who were more or less contemporaries all over Europe, will give the most intelligent and intelligibly ordered system. The links are often slight, but taken as a whole the order of the procession as it passes before the eye is neither arbitrary nor chaotic.

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The first picture, the "Annunciation," by Simone Martini of Siena (Pl. 1), is also the earliest in date, for it was painted in 1333, three years before Giotto's death and six years before that of Duccio, Simone's Sienese predecessor. It is the influence of Duccio that is apparent in this charming flowerlike painting, which bears no trace of the robuster, more dramatic spirit of Florentine art. Fra Angelico's "Coronation of the Virgin" (Pl. 2) was painted in Florence about a century later, just at the time when the van Eyck brothers were inaugurating a new era in northern art with the great altar-piece of the Lamb at Ghent, and Stephan Lochner of Cologne produced his gracious "Madonna with the Violet" (Pl. 3), a picture which breathes the same idyllic spirit as that which animated Simone and Angelico.

Very different in character are the Madonnas painted by Jan van Eyck in Bruges. In the next picture we seem to have fallen from heaven to earth, from the region of the unreal and mystic to the world of every day. Observation has taken the place of sentiment. Yet even in this somewhat ill-favoured "Madonna of Lucca" (Pl. 4) something of the influence of the Cologne painters may be traced. It is not known where the van Eycks acquired the rudiments of their art, but it is probable that Jan's elder brother Hubert actually learned in the school of Cologne. Yet a world of accomplishment lies between the primitive and charming works of these German artists and Hubert van Eyck's great Ghent altar-piece of the "Adoration of the Lamb," which is the starting-point and at the same time the *chef d'œuvre* of early Flemish painting. In the exquisite picture of

"The Marys at the Sepulchre," now ascribed to Hubert (Pl. 5), the same advance on the older school is evident.

It is interesting to compare this with the very similar subject by an Umbrian artist, Piero della Francesca (Pl. 6), painted some forty years later. In both pictures the mystery and awe of the scene are intensified by the wonderful effect of early morning light investing landscape and figures with an unearthly radiance. In both the clumsy guards serve as a foil to the principal actors in the scene. But for all these similarities, were we to see the originals of these two pictures together face to face, it is their differences that would strike us most. Hubert van Eyck's panel is a small easel picture, as rich and glowing in colour as his new method of oil painting could achieve. Piero's life-sized fresco, still clinging to the wall of the Municipio in Borgo San Sepolcro, is a monumental work designed for decoration on a great scale. Its composition is necessarily formal, its perspective elaborately accurate in contrast to the haphazard arrangement and faulty drawing of Hubert's picture.

To Piero also was formerly ascribed the delightful "Madonna" (Pl. 7) with which the name of Baldovinetti, his fellow pupil under Domenico Veneziano, is now honoured. But here are none of Piero's characteristic qualities, no massive figures, no sturdy poses. Piero was a man of brain and intellectual power to whom elegance and charm made no appeal. Baldovinetti was of less heroic stuff, yet here we have this unequal Florentine painter at his happiest moment. The tall, slender Madonna dominates a landscape which, indeed, is not unlike the peculiar type

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originated by Piero as we see it in his "Nativity" in the National Gallery.

The decorative function assigned to the interesting landscape in this picture is in striking contrast to the all important rôle it plays in Perugino's great Pazzi "Crucifixion" (Pl. 8). Here, as with Hubert van Eyck, the landscape, where the great vault of the sky melts into a distant horizon, plays its distinct part in deepening the mood of the picture, which is one of unruffled peace and calm resignation. There was nothing incongruous in the introduction of medieval saints in company with the personages of the New Testament. Indeed, even contemporaries themselves often figure in the church pictures their munificence has commissioned. Chancellor Bladelin joins the Madonna and St. Joseph in the worship of the Holy Child in Roger van der Weyden's Berlin altar-piece (Pl. 9). Less intimately associated with the subject of the picture is the donor Piero del Pugliese in Filippino's "Madonna appearing to St. Bernard" (Pl. 10).

Side by side with this somewhat apologetic introduction of portraiture both in Flanders and Italy the art of portrait painting was more and more winning to an independent position. Many and various were the methods adopted, from the flat decorative treatment of the profile portrait assigned to Verrocchio (Pl. 11) to the more naturalistic rendering of his Flemish contemporary Memlinc (Pl. 12). Profile portraits were much in vogue in Italy in the fifteenth century, at least among those who had any pretence to pronounced and well cut features, and no doubt where these were lacking the artist could contribute something towards them. In marked contrast to the severe simplicity of setting of Verrocchio's portrait is the studied elaboration of the surroundings and accessories in the picture of Martin van Nieuwenhove (Pl. 12). But nothing is sacrificed to decorative effect at any rate in the face, which seems in its sensitive modelling to be a careful and sympathetic likeness. The Flemish painters indeed excelled above all in portraiture. At the very summit of their achievement stands Jan van Eyck's marvellous double portrait of Arnolfini and his wife (Pl. 13). So lifelike and faithful is the presentment of these plain burghers that we seem to be carried across the centuries to the little room in Bruges where their life's drama was enacted. Here, too, we have one of the earliest instances of the painting of an interior almost in the manner which the Dutch genre painters two centuries later were to develop. This genre painting was much more allied to the closely observant spirit of the north than to the more imaginative genius of Italy. Yet occasionally, as in the fresco of the "Death of S. Fina" by Ghirlandaio (Pl. 14), Baldovinetti's most famous pupil, painted some fifty years later than the Arnolfini portrait, even a sacred subject is treated with something of everyday intimacy. Here, too, we have an interior, but of the simplest design, though there is naturally little scope in broad open fresco-painting for subtleties of lighting and *nuances* of tone. In these frescoes Ghirlandaio shows a more intimate sympathy than is found in some of his later work, where he too often falls into triviality and commonplace.

In striking contrast to this homely scene is

Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" (Pl. 15) which follows. This vision of the poet-painter is treated with all the fresh imaginativeness of the young Renaissance, engrossed in the newly discovered fairy-tales of Greece and Rome, and half believing that for their very beauty's sake they must be wholly true. For us the wistful form of Giuliano de' Medici's beloved lady, Simonetta Vespucci, figuring as Venus fresh-risen from the sea, is symbolic of the new spirit which was reborn out of the past into this mediæval world, eager to welcome though perhaps but dimly understanding it. To Botticelli, however, any literary or allusive ideas were at least secondary to the instinct which made him treat the figure as so much decorative material, every line of which has some significance in the scheme of the composition.

This picture, like Signorelli's "School of Pan" (Pl. 16), was painted for Lorenzo de' Medici, who, more than any one of the great patrons of learning, had devoted his leisure to introducing the forms and models of antiquity into the art of his own day. Signorelli's energetic impersonal treatment of the nude differs from that of his Florentine contemporary. To him, too, true precursor of Michelangelo, beauty of line meant much, but still more was he concerned with the structure of the human form itself. If Botticelli might sometimes sacrifice anatomical possibility to completeness of decorative effect, Signorelli subordinated grace or fluency of line to the revelation of every secret of the nude figure, which he delights to represent in all possible positions, forcing it to express every shade of emotion. Signorelli's gods are mortals of supreme physical development, not etherealised incarnations of the poet's imagination. And yet for all his realism the picture is the very embodiment of the poetry of Music.

From this great concert of nature it is a far cry to Correggio's rendering of an old myth and treatment of the nude in that wonderful group of "Mercury, Venus and Cupid" in the National Gallery (Pl. 17). Here severity has given place to a melting sweetness, delight in actual structure to a sensuous joy in the surface and texture of soft living flesh. Idyllic and intimate rather than majestic and detached is the whole conception.

Correggio is typical of one aspect of the great life of the Italian Renaissance, as Symonds calls it, "the age in which, not counting for the moment Venice, four archangelic natures gathered up all that had been hitherto achieved in art." Of this great quartet—Correggio, Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo—Correggio and Leonardo, different as they were, had this at least in common, that for them the play of light and shadow became of supreme importance. Leonardo left but few completed works behind him, but none surpasses that portrait of which so much has been said and written, that face into which he threw such subtle expression,—"Mona Lisa" (Pl. 18). It is sad to think that in the case of all Leonardo's greatest works they have either perished altogether and exist only as a great artistic tradition, like the Sforza monument, or, like the "Last Supper" and this portrait, are but the ghosts of their former selves. Yet such was his genius that even in their ruin they stand apart, as it were, from all other achievement. His "Virgin and Child with St. Anne" (Pl. 19) has also suffered at the hand of time, which has dimmed the landscape, though it cannot touch the elaborate artlessness of the composition, or the gracious types of mother and daughter.

The third voice in the quartet is that of the suave and scholarly Raphael, who learned from every one that he might teach all. In this lovely "Sposalizio" (Pl. 20) he is still under the dreamy spell of Umbrian and Peruginesque mysticism, while the subject of the picture may have been suggested by the sacred relic, the marriage ring of the Virgin, which was the peculiar pride of the cathedral at Perugia. So rapidly did the young artist develop, so eagerly did he absorb and make his own every influence around him, that only seven years after this work, still so distinctly quattrocentist in feeling and execution, he was capable of conceiving and carrying out such a mature and sophisticated scheme of decoration as that of the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican, from which the "Parnassus" is given here (Pl. 21). For all that it is the illustration of an idea, an apotheosis of poesy, half antiquarian, half historical in character, yet it is infinitely more than this. Far from achieving only a dry-as-dust effect, as literary pictures are wont to do, Raphael shows his greatness by producing at once a monumental piece of decoration, a lovely colour harmony, and a composition as rhythmically elegant and graceful, in spite of the exigencies of space, as any *fête champêtre* of Watteau. Raphael's life was short indeed, and considering how much he produced it is not surprising that in his later years he relied much on the help of pupils. But entirely by his own hand is his portrait of Baldassare Castiglione (Pl. 22), the friend and patron of the artist's closing years. Here, indeed, we are before one of the great portraits of the Renaissance, worthy to rank with the "Mona Lisa" (Pl. 18), "Charles v" (Pl. 43), and "Innocent x" (Pl. 57), and it is an interesting personality revealed with true sympathetic appreciation. Even did we know nothing of the author of *Il Cortegiano*, himself one of the great courtiers of that courtly age, this portrait would speak of him and for him.

Deeper and sterner than this blithe note of Raphael sounds the sonorous voice of Michelangelo, the greatest, most tragic spirit of his age. If with Raphael all he touched turned to instant beauty by mere contact with his serene nature, with Michelangelo it was only after infinite travail of spirit that the mighty conceptions of his great lonely mind embodied themselves in form. To the heritage of his artistic ancestors, Giotto, Masaccio, Donatello, he brought an individuality so powerful, so self-contained and self-sufficing, that he stands alone at the summit of Florentine art, without a peer. To Michelangelo, as to the Greeks, the nude was the final aim and purpose of art, and on the ceiling of the Sixtine Chapel the human form became in the highest degree expressive. In the "Creation of Adam" (Pl. 23) he has gone far beyond the naturalism of his early works, the "David" and the "Battle of Pisa."

While Michelangelo was working out his stupendous creations in Rome and Florence, his contemporaries in the North were pursuing the even tenor of their way not uninfluenced by the art of Italy, which they all too often attempted to emulate. Dürer and Holbein in Germany, Quentin Matsys and Brueghel in Flanders, however, upheld the integrity of their northern traditions. Dürer, indeed, journeyed to Italy, where his strong artistic personality was not without its influence on the rising artists of Venice, notably Titian himself. But for all his Italian studies and his own theorizings on the science of proportion and anatomy, he seldom succeeded in attaining ideal beauty of form. His feeling was for the quaint, the fantastic, the homely and the characteristic rather than for the grand, the graceful or the flowing. Sensuous beauty found little place in his sober, earnest, intensely expressive art. The life-size full-face portrait of himself at Munich (Pl. 24) is one of his early works. It was the marvellous minuteness of his brush-work that provoked undisguised admiration among his Venetian hosts. And, unlike most painters, with advancing years he neither learned to despise nor forgot to exercise this scrupulous and careful technique, though in his last works, such as the portrait of Hieronymus Holtzschuer (Pl. 25), painted in 1526, two years before the artist's death, he combined it with a maturer simplicity of vision. Melanchthon, indeed, tells us that Dürer was wont to sigh over the crowded pictures of his youth, in which elaboration had prevailed over simple grandeur.

Among the artists whom Dürer met on his journey to the Netherlands in 1520, Barent van Orley received special mention in that careful diary kept by the German master. Van Orley, like Mabuse, was deeply influenced by the prevailing taste for Italian styles and Italian models, and smothered his own individuality in imitation of

Raphael. These same Italianizers, who so completely lost their bearings in their endeavours to introduce an exotic style foreign to all the traditions of their school, yet remained sober in their portraits, and, in the fine presentment of Chancellor Carondelet (Pl. 26), van Orley shows himself a worthy descendant of the van Eycks. Quentin Matsys, to whom until quite recently this portrait was attributed, never succumbed to the Italianizing craze even in his religious subjects. We have indeed passed beyond the devout age when Roger van der Weyden and Memlinc made of a religious subject a fervently pious picture. The spirit had changed. Even in Flanders the Renaissance, with its revolutionizing of old ideals, was tending to the secularization of art. Matsys's picture of the "Madonna and Child" (Pl. 27), one of his most delightful creations, is a purely human document. Old Peter Brueghel indeed, anticipating Teniers and the Dutchmen, went unhesitatingly to the people for his subjects, and, as in his "Peasants' Wedding" (Pl. 28), entirely rid himself of all conventions and formalities. He painted life as he found it, allying a homely expressiveness to an innate sense of decoration, and his pictures live and move with a freedom which an earlier generation would have regarded as licence.

In Germany, too, the more rigid traditions of earlier art were breaking down. "The Holy Family at the Fountain" (Pl. 29), by Altdorfer, the contemporary of Dürer and Cranach, expresses the playful, fantastic genius of German fairy-tale, combined with delight in a romantic landscape not limited by the bounds of mere naturalism. There was

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nothing inconsistent in the fact that Altdorfer, while apparently favouring the reformed religion, should paint the Virgin and even dedicate his picture to her, as the inscription on the plinth of the fountain records. For the cult of the Madonna died but slowly, and only a later age learned to label it as heterodoxy.

Dürer and Altdorfer are separated by barely a quarter of a century from Holbein, yet while they carry us into a strange and unreal world, Holbein seems to belong to us. His men and women, but for their costumes, might be our contemporaries; his art needs no explanation. In the same year that Dürer painted his portrait of Holtzschuer (Pl. 25) Holbein completed the great altar-piece of Jacob Meyer in the Grand-ducal Palace at Darmstadt (Pl. 30). Comparing Holbein with Dürer, it may be said that if Dürer is the greater creative genius, the scholar, philosopher and man of science, Holbein is greater as a painter pure and simple. Beauty of form and colour, after-thoughts with Dürer, were with Holbein an integral part of his art. In this Meyer Madonna the crabbed forms and grotesque *motifs* of earlier German art have given place to largeness of design, dignity and restraint, together with a strong sense of decorative effect. Still more decorative both in colour and detail is his setting for the portrait of Georg Gisze (Pl. 31), the merchant, in his unconventional counting-house. Of all the world's great portrait painters Holbein is, with the exception of Velazquez, the least personal in his attitude towards his sitters. All his powers are concentrated on rendering the features before him

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with the accuracy and precision of the born draughtsman, and he shows no desire to take the spectator into his confidence or to regard the sitter with any particular sympathy. Yet in the delightful portrait of Christina of Milan (Pl. 32), one of his rare full lengths, he has obviously felt in touch with his singularly attractive subject. Something of the spontaneity and gracious simplicity of this portrait may be due to the fact that for the sketch from which the picture was subsequently painted the artist had to work in feverish haste in the short time allowed for the sitting.

In the next group of pictures we turn from these artists of Florence, Flanders and Germany to their contemporaries in Venice. Florentines and Venetians were indeed both Italians, but they had little else in common. The Venetians in their sea-girt city seemed to stand aloof from the rest of Italy, apart and self-contained.

But before Venice we pass by Padua, where Mantegna, the painter of the great altar-piece of S. Zeno in Verona (Pl. 33), serves as a link, though chiefly of a personal kind, between Florence and Venice. For if he was influenced by the Florentines, Uccello and Donatello, he was related by marriage to Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, though he developed on very different lines from his Venetian contemporaries. It was the disappointment of Dürer's visit to Venice that he was never able to see Mantegna, who died that very year. For though in Mantegna the antiquarian spirit ruled strong, he shared in the zeal for scientific research with which Dürer, in common with Piero della Francesca and

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Leonardo, was so intensely preoccupied. The altar-piece of S. Zeno was indeed painted about the same time as Baldovinetti's "Madonna" in the Louvre (Pl. 7) and Piero's "Resurrection" in Borgo San Sepolcro (Pl. 6), and it is interesting to compare Mantegna's composition of the "Resurrection" in the predella, the original of which is at Tours, with that of Piero in his great fresco. For all that the lives of the brothers-in-law Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini covered much the same period, after their early youth they diverged entirely in aim and expression. Yet as we can see in the two versions of "The Agony in the Garden" in the National Gallery, painted when their interests no doubt still followed the same course, they both revealed a common influence.

With Giovanni Bellini we enter the realm of Venetian painting proper. We have left the world of the scholar and the humanist, the world in which the purer spirit of Greece was fostered with self-conscious preciousness, and where the more heroic Roman ideals were restored to life. Venice cared little for the nice subtleties of scholarship. The Renaissance appealed to her wholly on the sensuous side. In her artists there is little intellectual intention. She was absorbed in the beauties and pleasures of the living world; she made her appeal less to the mind than to the eye.

During Giovanni Bellini's long life he passed through the phase of religious painting in the quattrocentist manner, which is the spirit of such an early work as his "Madonna with St. Catherine and Mary Magdalen" (Pl. 34), to the fuller, freer, more radiant manner which seemed to burst into life in the early years of the Cinque-Cento. Bellini indeed developed slowly, and from a sober youth advanced to an old age in which the romance and poetry usually associated with early life became revealed to him. At an age when men's powers usually decay, he came to his full maturity. How far it is fair to give the credit of the more modern outlook revealed in the S. Zaccaria altar-piece (Pl. 35) to his pupil Giorgione, it is impossible to say. But we may suppose that the master in his old age caught back from the pupil something of youthful poetic fervour and joyousness, and doubtless the new spirit which found its vent in this "new manner" was in the air, and one man fired another. The rich glowing golden colouring which is the glory of Venetian art is here shown in its full splendour. Indeed, the unity of the picture is not that of a common sentiment so much as of a definite, harmonious colour composition. In the Venetian pictures of the ripe period the effect of the *ensemble* has superseded the working out of every detail for its own sake.

Almost at the same moment Giorgione was giving to the world his Madonna of Castelfranco (Pl. 36), so closely allied in its mood with Bellini's S. Zaccaria altar-piece (Pl. 35), and heralding in the new age with which the term Giorgionesque has come to be associated. It was in this same year that Raphael, a little younger than Giorgione, painted his youthful "Sposalizio" (Pl. 20), and the two pictures are expressive of the difference between the Italians of the Arno and the Apennines on the one side and the Adriatic on the other.

Again, what worlds separate Giorgione's "Venus" (Pl. 37) from the goddess of Botticelli (Pl. 15). Where in the one all is swift, fluttering movement, in the other we find a calm depth of repose in figure and landscape. The one is the ideal poetic embodiment of the painter's imagination with but little reference to actual fact. The other shows a noble realism of treatment. The one is a goddess with something of other-worldliness clinging to her, the other is no less noble because she is wholly human as she lies pillowed upon Mother Earth.

Giorgione's idyllic romanticism finds its fullest expression in the "Concert" or "Fête Champêtre" of the Louvre (Pl. 38), in which an Arcadian group is gathered, not in some deliberate intention, religious or historical, but for the pure pagan enjoyment of the golden hour in a sylvan landscape under summer skies. Here indeed is the quintessence of the Giorgionesque, happy people artlessly enjoying the pleasures of life without *arrière pensée*, nature herself in tune with their harmonious mood. Titian's so-called "Sacred and Profane Love" (Pl. 39) is pervaded by much the same atmosphere, for the association of the two young painters in Bellini's studio had been close, and for many years after Giorgione's early death Titian remained under the spell and glamour of his friend's intenser imagination.

It would seem as though all that Titian touched turned to pure gold in his hands. His was one of those fine natures that instinctively select what is noblest and most distinguished about them. The world he creates is one of serene grandeur and calm well-being. During the course of his long life, in which like Bellini he steadily developed, unlike Bellini he left behind the romance and lyricism of his early days to gain a greater intensity of force and dramatic power. To the early period of Titian's development belong also the "Daughter of Herodias" in the Doria Palace (Pl. 40), where again his beautiful type of female head is represented, and his strangely interesting "Man with a Glove" in the Louvre (Pl. 41), a portrait of elusive beauty presenting a youth of infinite distinction. A few years later Titian painted his great "Entombment" (Pl. 42), and at about the same time completed the "Assumption" in the Venice Academy. The "Entombment" is a masterpiece of line and colour composition and dramatic unity, deeply impressive in the arrangement of the lighting. To his maturity belongs the seated portrait of Charles v (Pl. 43), painted on the same occasion as the great equestrian piece which hangs in the Prado. It is strange to pass from the impassioned poetry of Titian's early work, and from a portrait expressing such perfect inward joy and serenity as the "Man with a Glove" (Pl. 41), to this tragic conception of the disappointed monarch.

Throughout the early part of the sixteenth century that romantic element which, as we have seen, originated with Giorgione, held sway in Venetian art. Such an idyll as Palma Vecchio's "Meeting of Jacob and Rachel" (Pl. 44) is entirely typical of this new manner of weaving poetry into the world of prose. The embrace of these Venetian lovers takes place in a spacious wooded valley, where flocks and herds gather round the well at the hour of watering.

In Paris Bordone's "Fisherman's Ring" (Pl. 45) the idyllic and romantic have given way to splendour and pageant. A glorious episode in the legendary annals of the city is celebrated here, and the gorgeous colour and stately pomp of the Republic form the theme of the picture. Bordone, though a true Venetian, is perhaps one of the most distinctive of the circle of sixteenth-century painters. His dazzling flesh tints, his brilliant draperies falling in small crumpled folds, and his clear transparent colour, are peculiarly his own. But like the others, he mixes all his colours with golden sunshine.

In this respect, Moretto of Brescia, for all his affinity with the Venetians and particularly Titian, stands somewhat apart in his preference for cool, silvery harmonies, wherein he joins hands with Paolo Veronese. Moretto remained to the end a strong champion of the Faith, and the churches of his native town are filled with imposing evidence of his Catholic attitude. In its grandeur of colouring and conception his "S. Giustina," one of the chief treasures of Vienna (Pl. 46), touches the highest point the artist ever attained. Returning to the Venetians proper, and to Tintoretto, we find ourselves in the presence of a more powerful spirit in whose dramatic conceptions less of the brimming evanescent joyousness of his school is apparent. Tintoretto, born about the time when Titian was painting his "Entombment" (Pl. 42), was first and foremost a great dramatic poet, and, like Leonardo, Correggio and Rembrandt, sought for poetic expression in the mysteries of light and shadow. Grandeur of imagination, breadth of treatment and colossal energy characterize his works. He was above all a painter of vast decorative systems, of great altar-pieces which impress by their boldness of design and something of largeness in their treatment. In his "Presentation of the Virgin" (Pl. 47) he would almost seem to have achieved his youthful aim of uniting with the grand drawing of Michelangelo the glowing colour of his own compatriot Titian. Equally rich, though of a cooler tonality, is the colour of that poetical gem of the Antecollegio, the "Bacchus and Ariadne crowned by Venus" (Pl. 48), one of four allegorical pieces executed in 1578 for the decoration of the Ducal Palace.

Like Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, too, worked for the most part on a large scale, ordering his figures as one who marshals a stately pageant. In the "Cuccina Family before the Madonna" (Pl. 49) Veronese shows his delight in the pomp and magnificence and in the glowing beauty of Venetian life. Vitality, robustness, and splendour pervade his pictures. In actual technique, in the broad freedom of his touch, he anticipates Rubens and Velazquez. Indeed, his exuberance, his dash and *éclat*, might well claim for him the title of the Rubens of Italy.

In the course of the sixteenth century the long succession of great Italians who had held the field of painting for some four centuries was drawing to a close, and no new men were coming forward to carry on the old traditions. Michelangelo, Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese had all passed away before the end of the century. In the North, too, the influence of Dürer and Holbein had spent itself, and the Low Countries, devastated by war and religious persecution, could barely keep alive a spark of the old fire. But just when painting seemed at its lowest ebb, in Flanders, Holland and Spain a fresh impulse was gathering force. One year after Titian's death, Rubens first saw the light. In the course of the next thirty years, Van Dyck, Velazquez, Claude, Hals and Rembrandt were born. Rubens, Velazquez and Rembrandt are the forefathers of modern painting. If they were the inheritors of the past they were still more the pioneers of the future.

Consciously swayed as he was by the Venetian tradition, Rubens never forgot to be his own virile self. As Delacroix said, "Force, vehemence, *éclat* with him take the place of grace and charm." There was in him, indeed, just that want of sensitiveness to the more obvious refinements which often coexists with the robuster qualities that go to make the pioneer. We find Rubens at his best and most characteristic in that superb creation of his maturity, the "Judgment of Paris" (Pl. 50), a brilliant fantasy with its dazzling flesh tints and silvery landscape. The whole scene breathes a spirit of poetry and romance, intensified by the wonderful if unnatural lighting and the glamour of the deep-chorded colour. No less congenial to his active, fertile imagination is the turbulent "Lion Hunt" (Pl. 51), in which dash and movement, chaos and ordered confusion prevail. Vivid indeed must have been the pictorial imagination which could construct such a scene. Vast experience and close observation alone could render possible so free and spirited a composition.

So much of the enormous output from the great painting-factory which Rubens & Co. carried on so successfully and lucratively is scarcely more than touched by the master himself, that those pictures which are entirely from his own brush stand out in refreshing contrast from the rank and file. The brilliant portrait of Helena Fourment and her son at Munich (Pl. 52) is one of his most spontaneous creations. Lightly thrown on the canvas, as it were *à l'improviste*, so fine is its condition that it might almost have been painted yesterday. Few painters of to-day, however, are so fastidious as was Rubens in his choice of pigments which should endure, a care abundantly justified by its results after three centuries.

With Rubens we must inevitably associate the greatest of all his pupils, Van Dyck. Less original and robust than his master, Van Dyck possessed that innate sense of refinement and elegance which formed so distinctive a feature of his portraits. Nurtured on Rubens's teaching, his impressionable nature gathered something wherever he went, and during his visit to Italy, it was under the glamour of Titian's works, still in their first freshness, that he fell. Van Dyck, unlike Holbein, his predecessor at the English Court, was the most personal of painters. If the one concentrated all his attention on his sitter, the other's would seem to have been divided equally between his sitter, himself and his audience. The portrait of Madame de Nole (Pl. 53) belongs to the years after Van Dyck's return from Italy, when, owing to Rubens's long absences on diplomatic missions, all Antwerp flocked to be painted by the younger artist, who made of every man a gentleman and every woman a lady. It is not surprising that it needed all the persuasive powers of Charles I to induce the popular painter to migrate to the English court, a momentous decision for English art. The portrait of Lord Wharton (Pl. 54) was one of the first he painted after his arrival, and, anxious no doubt to justify his new appointment, he has put his very best into this attractive subject. The double portrait, too, of the so-called Carew and Killigrew (Pl. 55), painted some six years later, betrays none of that perfunctoriness which mars many of the portraits produced at this time in Van Dyck's studio, canvases which bear all too little trace of his own handiwork.

Born in the same year as Van Dyck, Velazquez developed in Spain a style which stands quite apart from the general trend of art in Northern Europe. Without any great gift of imagination, Velazquez is perhaps the most original painter the world has ever produced. All that stands for naturalism in Titian and Rubens is sheer convention as compared with the Spaniard's novel conception of truth to nature, which was indeed not so much truth to actual fact as truth to appearances. His appreciation of colour-values, the relation of colours to each other as determined by the amount of light which each reflects, is his great contribution to the art of painting. He realized, too, as none had before him, the envelope of atmosphere which surrounds all objects, and softens every outline. He sets his figures in an atmospheric space rather than against a background, and it is just this which gives his pictures so great a semblance of reality as almost to amount to illusion. He was singularly independent and individual in his art. Even Rubens, who visited Madrid as a veteran when Velazquez was little more than a youth, influenced him not at all; neither was he swayed by the great

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masters whose works were revealed to him during his *Wanderjahr* in Italy. From the Venetians, indeed, he took some hints as to the building up of a great decorative composition such as the "Surrender of Breda" (Pl. 56), painted soon after his return to Spain, one of the greatest historical pictures in the world, and at the same time a magnificent piece of decoration.

As a portrait painter Velazquez had as his constant model the phlegmatic, underhung Spanish King, whose heavy features and dreary character can have been far from inspiring. But this mattered little to so keen and dispassionate an observer, who would surely have endorsed Reynolds's dictum that no subject is uninteresting, for all have light and shadow. So of such an unpromising subject as Innocent x (Pl. 57), the least prepossessing of Popes, he created one of the supremest triumphs of portraiture. It seems that the Pope's character, crafty, greedy, unscrupulous and sensual, was no ill match for his face, and it was a daring thing for an orthodox Spaniard to tell the Pope the bare truth in so outspoken a fashion. Unorthodox, too, according to the rigid ideas of Inquisition-ridden Spain, was his "Venus and Cupid" (Pl. 58), in all its exquisite and unabashed nudity, a piece of consummate realism lending itself to superb decorative effect. In the two great subject-pictures of his last and most mature years, for his work never suffered decline, "Las Hilanderas" (Pl. 59), and "Las Meninas" (Pl. 60), genre pictures on a colossal scale, his original treatment of light and atmosphere reached its highest development. In modern parlance, Velazquez appears in these wonderful *tours de force* as the first of the Impressionists, the first to seek unity of effect through unity of light and shadow, to render the single vivid impression as the scene strikes suddenly upon the eye, and thus to achieve a realism new to painting, a realism of unity.

One year later than Van Dyck and Velazquez was born Claude Lorraine, with whose name rather than with that of any other has been associated the rise of landscape as a great independent art, for all that he, too, was but one of a number of painters in the north of Europe who were making this discovery for themselves. For a long while Claude stood to the English people as the one great painter France had produced. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Ruskin's misrepresentations, based on the mistaken idea that to exalt Turner he must abase Claude, succeeded in displacing him altogether, but many who were then over-persuaded have since returned to their allegiance to the great master of sunshine.

It is indeed fortunate for landscape art that it need not attain what in portraiture would be called a good likeness, for it is not required to reproduce faithfully the geographical features of some particular scene. Claude makes no attempt to hold up a mirror to nature. It was not that he could not see her face to face, for his sketches embody his intimate studies of her many aspects. He chose rather to create an ideal world of his own, more heroic than is this plain world of ours, a world formalized, ordered and arranged with the elaborate stateliness of an Italian garden. So here in his "Cleopatra landing at

Tarsus" (Pl. 61) the subject is a mere excuse for the magic city he calls up from the waves.

Side by side with this strangely beautiful yet withal unreal presentment of nature must be placed the more sober but equally grand renderings of sky and landscape by Rubens and the great Dutchmen. In Rubens's "Château de Stein" (Pl. 62), the rising sun illumines no fairyland of the painter's fancy, but the wide expanse of fertile cultivated plain, intersected by willow-fringed canals, which stretched itself before the painter's eyes every time he walked out, as he is actually doing here, from his stately country seat. Rubens prefers the picturesque to the sublime, the natural to the classical, and revels in the flat scenery of his native land just as he delights in the superabundant charms of its florid women.

Just such immense expanse of sky and plain was treated in solemn mood some half-century later by Jacob Ruisdael (Pl. 63). Goethe struck the right note when he lauded Ruisdael as the poet among Dutch landscape painters. His is indeed the poetry of the sublime, of the melancholy and awful. His dark, troubled sea-pieces reveal his wonted tendency to gloom and severity. In his forest scenes, it is the sombre loneliness, the stern primeval grandeur of wild nature that he chooses to dwell upon. He was indeed in a more genial vein when he painted his many versions of the wide Haarlem flats, lighted as here by rejoicing rifts of sunshine from a cloud-laden sky.

Round Ruisdael group themselves many of those youthful painters of Dutch scenery who raised their native school of landscape to that pre-eminent position which it held throughout the seventeenth century. The picturesque red-brick buildings of their canal-girt towns offered also subjects ready made which the painters were not slow to seize. Vermeer in his "View of Delft" (Pl. 64) has left an artistic impression of his birthplace which, in its rich colour and magic lighting, remains one of the most brilliant and satisfying pictures of the school. For many years the very name of this amazing painter had fallen into obscurity, while his pictures were ascribed variously to Pieter de Hoogh and other members of the Dutch school. His rehabilitation is one of the triumphs of nineteenth-century criticism, and though in only some thirty-four pictures is his distinctive touch clearly to be recognized, he once more takes a distinguished place among the great painters of the world.

To the Dutchmen of this time, too, we owe the wonderful series of sea pictures, of which William van de Velde's "Marine" in the Munich Gallery (Pl. 65) is a superb example. Not only had they the sea on their borders, but a fleet, proudly watching over their newly-won political and religious freedom, guarded their coasts. It would have been surprising indeed if a people so pictorially-minded had not found in their seas and shipping a new source of inspiration.

Indeed every branch of painting was actively pursued in this first flush of independence and prosperity. Painters seemed to rise up from the ground to meet the demand resulting from these new conditions. The genial centre of a group of painters at Haarlem, Frans Hals soon acquired fame as a painter of the portraits so much in demand. The superb picture belonging to Earl Spencer (Pl. 66) displays the breadth and bravura of his later years. But it is only in Haarlem, where hangs that gorgeous series of portrait-groups painted for the various local Guilds, that we can appreciate Hals's genius to the full. It was just in this difficult matter of the portrait-group that Dutch art achieved some of its greatest triumphs. The feeling which had prompted Corporations and Chapters to perpetuate their memory by the offering of an altar-piece to church or cloister, expended itself in this country of Calvin in a pictured memorial of the worthy donors themselves. The Regent or Corporation pieces became thus as characteristic a feature of Dutch art as the altar-piece still remained in the adjacent Catholic provinces. This grouping of a dozen or more citizens, each anxious for self-display on equal terms, presented obvious difficulties to the painter, who was not always able to solve them with such complete success as was Hals in his famous series of which the "Guild of Archers" (Pl. 67) is perhaps the finest.

The same problem was approached in quite other manner by Rembrandt in the so-called "Night-Watch" (Pl. 68), which actually represents a sortie of the Amsterdam Civic Guard in broad daylight. In this case Rembrandt, disregarding the usual conditions of such a commission, set out to produce what should be before all else a picture, and only as an afterthought a series of portraits. This stupendous *tour de force*, a miracle of dramatic lighting, was painted eleven years after the "Presentation in the Temple" (Pl. 69), an exquisite gem of the artist's early period when he still painted in a close, almost minute, manner, though he was already giving hints of that breadth of vision which was to be the glory of his maturity. To this maturity belongs the "Christ at Emmaus" (Pl. 70), so impressive and dramatic for all its simplicity. Before such a picture as this it is impossible not to feel how entirely individual is Rembrandt's art. He has broken ground where none has been before. The types are homely, yet the whole conception is inspired. Into Rembrandt, as into Michelangelo, seems to have entered something of that *Weltschmerz* which was perhaps little understood by those around them. On the more technical side, as the great chiaroscurist, Rembrandt's discovery was that of the mystery of luminous darkness enveloping and half revealing the forms that people it. It is this, too, which lends mystery to his portraits, though few reflect so winning a personality as that of his son Titus (Pl. 71).

With Vermeer of Delft, on the other hand, light was no strong, concentrated brilliance merging in surrounding gloom as Rembrandt conceived it, but a steady all-pervading silver fluid or essence in which every object seems to be bathed. In his "Soldier and Laughing Girl" (*Frontispiece*), it pours through the open window on the left against which the dark mass of the man's figure is silhouetted, flooding the grey wall and map and sharply touching the head and shoulders of the girl. So, too, in "The Milkmaid" (Pl. 73), the beauty of the picture lies in its cool colour-harmonies and the softly diffused light which glorifies the homely figure of the woman and the group of still-life on the table. Indeed the Dutch painters were the first to make still-life interesting through their instinct for harmonious colour and subordination in grouping. Such a picture as Kalf's still-life group in the Amsterdam Museum (Pl. 74) is but an independent elaboration for its own sake of objects which in a larger picture might be introduced as accessories, as Vermeer uses them in "The Milkmaid."

To de Hoogh, also, the problem of light confined within four walls was of peculiar interest. But while Vermeer's schemes of clear blues, yellows, and vibrant blacks were harmonized in silvery tones, de Hoogh bathed his no less thrilling blacks and scarlets in warmer light. In the "Cellar" (Pl. 75), adopting a favourite device, he gives through a doorway a glimpse into another room, and by means of clever perspective and pleasant lighting increases the sense of spacious emptiness.

Vermeer's influence was strongly felt by the Dutch genre painters of his day, among whom Terburg stands conspicuous as the finest colourist. He dwells with delight on the brilliance and texture of the satins and velvets worn by the ladies of his elegant interiors. In the exquisite "Concert" in Berlin (Pl. 76) he unites a breadth worthy of Vermeer with the consummate rendering of fine surfaces so peculiarly his own. Metsu, who sought his subjects alike in cottage and mansion, vied with Terburg as a painter of fashionable life, as appears in the "Letter-Reader" (Pl. 77), belonging to that period of his short career at which the painter was at the height of his fame.

Jan Steen's genre is often of a more homely and genial character, full of infectious humour and revelry. Of all the Dutch genre painters he was the most unequal, but at his best the most successful in expressing individuality and in differentiating between his types. An air of contented well-being animates the group of "The Painter and his Family" at the Hague (Pl. 78), where his skill in displaying a number of figures in a small room with perfect ease and naturalness is well evidenced.

Before the end of the seventeenth century, the artistic florescence in Holland had completely died away after a period of unusual brilliance, and ceased as abruptly, and to all appearances as finally, as the Italian Renaissance a hundred years before. In Venice, indeed, Guardi stood alone, the solitary survivor of Venetian painting, embodying his dreams of the beauty of his city in paintings of rare poetry and distinction. Before such a picture as the "Giudecca" (Pl. 79) we are inclined to rub our eyes and wonder how Venice in her eighteenth-century decadence could produce a masterpiece of life and atmosphere like this. The great traditions of Venetian art had vanished more than a century before, and only the rather prosaic vision of Antonio Canaletto, delicate and penetrating as it was, had kept alive at all the old connexion between Venice and painting. Guardi found no successor in his native city, and it was left for a painter from the North to carry on the story of her beauty.

Thus the impetus given by the Renaissance to the art of painting in every cultured country in Europe had spent itself. Art must now look forward not backward, and the eighteenth century was a period of transition. In France the pompous art encouraged by Louis XIV was discarded for the graceful extravagances of the court of Louis XV. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi!* Louis XIV with his ceremonious pomposities is gone; Lebrun with his vast academic commonplaces is no more. Ladies and gentlemen, it is time to relax. Let us play.

All the elegant artificiality of a society which lived for pleasure is presented by Watteau with charm and *esprit* in his "Embarkation for the Island of Cythera" (Pl. 80), a delicate eighteenth-century transcript of the spirit of Rubens's "Garden of Love." In the *fêtes galantes* of Watteau and his followers the serious side of life is not so much as hinted at, and these Court gallants and their ladies masquerading as nymphs and shepherds seem to know of no occupation more strenuous than that of making love. The artist's swift nervous touch, light and brilliant, accords entirely with the spirit of these dainty creations.

But while the Court might thus disport itself, the quiet life of the bourgeoisie still continued to pursue the even tenor of its way, and found in Chardin a sympathetic exponent of the common things of daily life. In his perfect sincerity and consummate artistry the Frenchman indeed challenges comparison with Terburg and Vermeer. His "Grace before Meat" (Pl. 81) charms as much by its truth of sentiment as by its mellow harmonious colouring. There are, too, in his pictures, for all their homely subjects, a grace and sprightliness peculiarly French.

If Watteau and Chardin released French art from the yoke of Italian tradition, this shortlived freedom came to an abrupt end with the French Revolution. With the Empire the cry was all for classicalism. David seems to have anticipated the wave of reaction which was to carry him into favour and set the antique once again upon a pedestal. He had no affinity with the free untrammelled style of Chardin. His "Madame Récamier" (Pl. 82) is eloquent of the classical taste which had superseded for the time all else. Indeed the treatment has more in common with sculpture than with painting. A severe grace of form has been sought and attained at the sacrifice of all else.

In England, which had never boasted a great national school of painting, having been content to borrow its artists and its styles from other countries, the new movement which began in the eighteenth century with Hogarth, flowed on uninterrupted, and for the first time since the days of the early miniaturists an English art not only flourished but even took the lead. Hogarth, the contemporary of Chardin, became, like him, the painter of the life of the people, though, unlike Chardin, he admitted a literary element into his pictures. This moralizing tendency has always been a pitfall to English artists. Yet for all Hogarth's persistent confusion of the relationship between art and morals, his didactic, not to say exhortatory style, his insistence on details to the detriment of the general effect, his delight in emphasizing the sordid side of life, not because it gave greater scope for his brush, but because it saved him the use of the pen, admitting all these, yet as a painter pure and simple, as a master of his craft, as a draughtsman, a colourist, a delineator of character and expression, he takes his place among the highest. He was indeed a pioneer, the creator of his own tradition. What he learned from older masters of technique he assimilated into his peculiar and distinctive style. He is the painter of the English life of his day in the streets and taverns, in the luxurious houses of the bourgeoisie, the prison, the sponging house, and on the stage, as in the "Scene from the Beggar's Opera" (Pl. 83).

English painting in the eighteenth century is associated above all with the art of portraiture and with the names of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Of these two artists, Reynolds belonged to the past, Gainsborough to the future. Reynolds raised himself upon the shoulders of his predecessors, Gainsborough stood by himself. Where the one studied the other felt. Reynolds, the industrious apprentice, the author of no less than two thousand pictures, came to high honour in his own day; Gainsborough, with his bare three hundred canvases, is the darling of ours. Through Reynolds's studio passed all the great personages of the time, and with his education and insight into character he caught from each his salient characteristic. In the "Nelly O'Brien" (Pl. 84) he has given appropriate expression to the pose and features of this consciously fascinating actress with her seductive smiling eyes—a modern Mona Lisa. The picture is as fresh and unconventional as its fair sitter. In his "Duchess of Devonshire and her Daughter" (Pl. 85) he introduces a more conventional studio setting, though the attitudes are deliciously natural and unstudied. If Reynolds had been a real old master he would have won fame as a painter of Madonna and Child, for nowhere is he so entirely fresh and delightful as in his portraits of these high-born English ladies with their cherubic children.

Reynolds as a colourist leans always towards the rich deep reds and browns and golden whites of the Venetians and Rubens ; Gainsborough is more in tune with the moderns in his preference for a scale of cool shimmering greens and blues. In his "Blue Boy" (Pl. 86) he has carried this tendency to its farthest limit. Something of that elegance which Van Dyck both found in and conferred upon these English aristocrats of his day, is innate in Gainsborough's presentations of their descendants. Nowhere is this more striking than in the galaxy of fair women who must have delighted in posing before this sensitive, sympathetic painter who understood them so well. Of these none is lovelier than the "Honourable Mrs. Graham" (Pl. 87), whose portrait he has painted with a touch of magical lightness in an incomparably brilliant colour-scheme.

Turner occupies a distinct and unique position in the English school of painting. He was no pioneer of a new tradition. No artistic clique claims him as its parent. He came and went, covered all the ground that had already been broken by his predecessors, Claude and the Dutchmen, and then exploited for himself a new region of sunlit beauty of which no painter since his day has passed the frontier. He kept himself aloof from others and cared nothing for the revolution which was going on in landscape painting during his own lifetime. In fact, his development, so far from being towards realism, passed from the grand naturalism of his early works to the inspired imagery of his later visions of earth and sky. Turner's affinity with the South was so strong that, before ever he had visited Italy, he was able to produce so stately and classical a composition as "Crossing the Brook" (Pl. 88), the masterpiece of his middle period. The later "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus" (Pl. 89) is perhaps his highest imaginative conception, a gorgeous colour-rhapsody full of mystery and awe.

Simultaneously with this entirely individual art of Turner, and, as it would seem, unobserved by him, a new movement, almost a revolution, was taking place in landscape painting, and it was England that led the way. Constable, born a year after Turner, was the innovator, the pioneer of one phase of the many-sided nineteenth century which was now dawning. His art, with its roots in the present, owed nothing to any predecessor. It was based on a return to nature. This cry had been heard before, but Constable voiced it in a new key. In a word, his discovery was the secret of *plein air*. He was the first to paint the full effect of midday sunlight, the glitter and sparkle of white lights on foliage, the fresh green hues of spring. The "brown-tree" school of landscape was killed at a blow. Constable, like Gainsborough, never left England, and his "Dedham Lock," known also as "The Leaping Horse" (Pl. 90), is a scene from that corner of Suffolk which will always be associated with his name.

The modern French school of landscape admittedly owes much to Constable, Corot perhaps less than others in so far as direct influence was concerned; but like that of the Englishman, Corot's art was the result of personal communion with nature as distinct from deriving his impressions at second-hand through books and pictures. Corot possessed the poet's vision shown so strongly in "The Lake" (Pl. 91), where the mistiness of early morning envelops trees and water in a halo of trembling vapour and a soft languorous spirit breathes over the landscape. How different a mood is evoked by Courbet's "Wave" (Pl. 92), a piece of tremendous, almost overpowering realism, seen with unerring truth of vision and painted with virile directness and power!

The work of Millet represents yet another phase of modern painting, a sympathetic interpretation of the toilsome life of the peasant and his relation to the soil. Millet's peasants belong to all time. They typify labour and the dignity of labour as it appeared to his silent, intensely religious temperament. "The Shepherdess" (Pl. 93) pausing in her task, is one with the wide plain and the dumb flock, all alike transfigured by the melting beauty of the peaceful afternoon light.

Holland, too, has been roused by the call of the new Renaissance. The spirits of Rembrandt and Ruisdael have again appeared in new forms in their own land. Israels, the modern Rembrandt, dwells like his predecessor among the people and paints the story of their strenuous lives. In such a picture as "A Mother's Care" (Pl. 94) he shows himself as much at home in the peasant's cottage as was Millet in the fields where he labours. Dutch landscape, too, after an interval of some two hundred years, would seem to have come to its own again. The brothers Maris—Matthew, William and Jacob—are the artistic descendants of their great forefathers, but they are far more than this. The subject of "The Four Windmills" (Pl. 95) inevitably suggests the famous picture by Jacob Ruisdael at Amsterdam, but though the voice may be the voice of Jacob the hand is the hand of a modern, with a technique and temperament essentially of the nineteenth century.

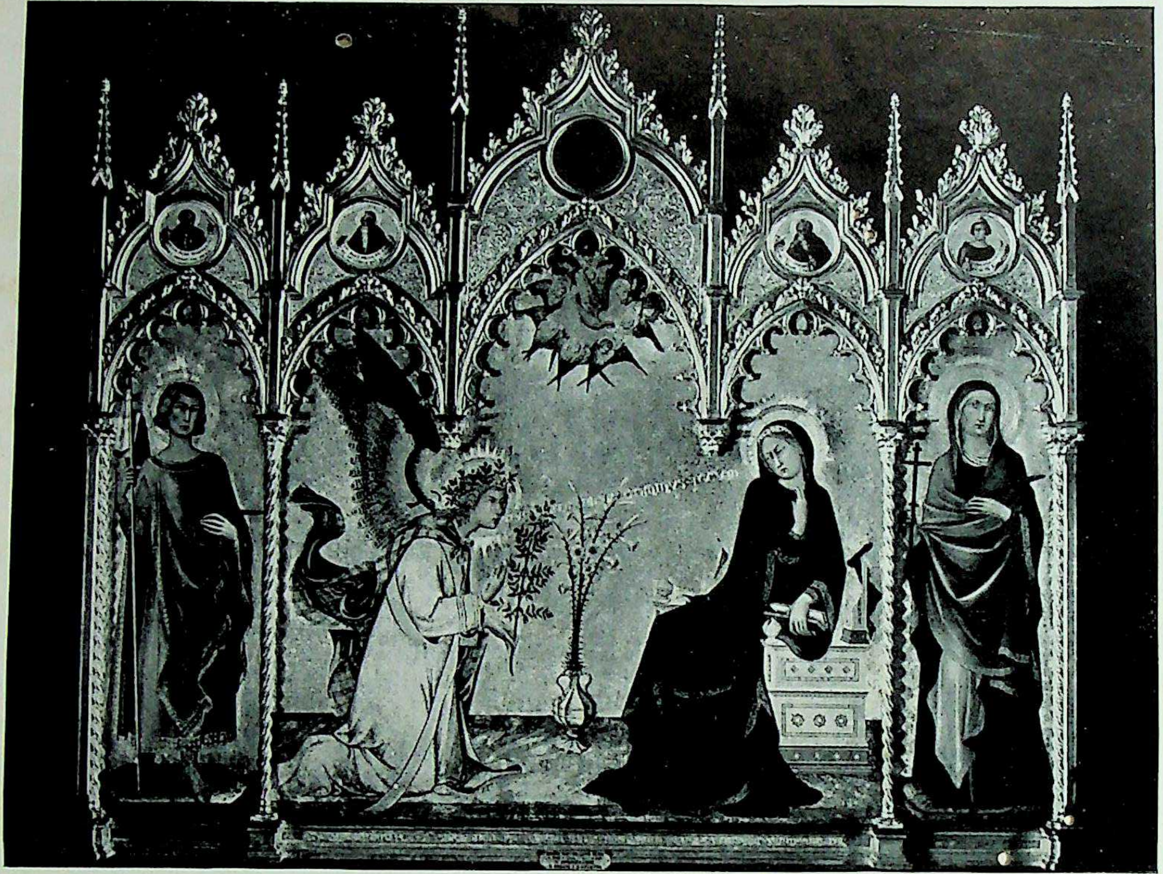
Modern painting is as complex and many-storied an edifice as modern life. Tradition once broken and defied, experiment has taken its place, and every man is a law unto himself. The Pre-Raphaelites, professing on the one hand to return to the ways of the Primitives, and on the other to join in the profession of allegiance to nature, fell between two stools. These modern eclectics in a sense grasped at too much, but they, too, helped in the emancipation of art from the worn-out and decadent ideals which were preventing all growth. Their clear, enamel-like colour, bright and vivid local tints, their fondness for impersonating their friends where studio models would have served, their view of the world, largely seen through the eyes of the legend-makers and poets of high romance, and their quite unabashed delight in reproducing every detail for the sake of what they considered truth, were their spirited protest against the muddy colour and vague generalities of the academic school. This love of detail, indeed, they carried to its extreme limit, with the most scrupulous regard for the truth of the appearance of the blade of grass or brick or stone painted when looked at by itself and for itself, but wholly false to truth of normal vision when considered in relation to the rest of the picture and as a subordinate part of a whole. In the few short years when Millais, one of the protagonists of this strenuous fellowship, brought out the best that was in him, his finest creation was that moving imaginative masterpiece "Sir Isumbras at the Ford" (Pl. 96). All that is most enduring in Pre-Raphaelite endeavour is reflected in this combination of noble if limited realism and poetic imagination.

Watts, whose long life covered almost the whole period of modern art, lived as it were in a world of his own. In spirit perhaps he was more in sympathy with Michelangelo than with his contemporaries. He has attempted too often to paint ideas so complex that his pictures become unintelligible, but in his "Sir Galahad" (Pl. 97) he does not lose himself in allegory, and the subject speaks for itself without need of literary interpretation. There is a simple and noble largeness of treatment in the upstanding figure of the young knight beside his horse, nor is a touch of mysticism absent from the rapt expression.

Among the moderns, Whistler, the eccentric, the misunderstood, strikes the most intensely personal note. He is a modern of the moderns for all his reminiscences of Velazquez and old Japan. To Whistler the beauty of pure paint appealed with peculiar directness. His pictures are emphatically "arrangements," elaborately thought out schemes in which everything that is not essential to the particular effect intended is sternly banished. He is as fastidious as he is final in his selection. The portrait of "Miss Alexander" (Pl. 98), for which he required countless sittings before his exacting taste was satisfied, is a conclusive answer, if such be needed, to those critics who complained that he imposed upon the public by his facility.

To a more monumental, less momentary, style of modern portraiture belongs Fantin-Latour's superb double portrait (Pl. 99), presented to the National Gallery by the lady in the picture, which to many was the revelation of a new side of the artist's genius. His flowers and fruit, his idylls and lithographs were familiar enough, but few perhaps knew of his portrait of Manet painted under that artist's influence and that of Bastien Lepage.

This long series of Masterpieces, many and various, is fitly closed by a work of one of the youngest painters of our day, whose untimely death has robbed the world of an artist of unusual promise. Some of Furse's portraits, indeed, carry us back to the great days of English art. In his "Diana of the Uplands" (Pl. 100), with its fine sweeping design and bold outline, there is more than a suggestion of great art, while the expression of the wind tearing through the picture is characteristic of the aims and achievements of modern painting.



Uffizi

ANNUNCIATION

BY SIMONE MARTINI AND LIPPO MEMMI

PLATES

PLATE I

SIMONE MARTINI AND LIPPO MEMMI

ANNUNCIATION

SIENESE SCHOOL
SIMONE MARTINI : *circa* 1285–1344
LIPPO MEMMI : (?) —— *circa* 1357

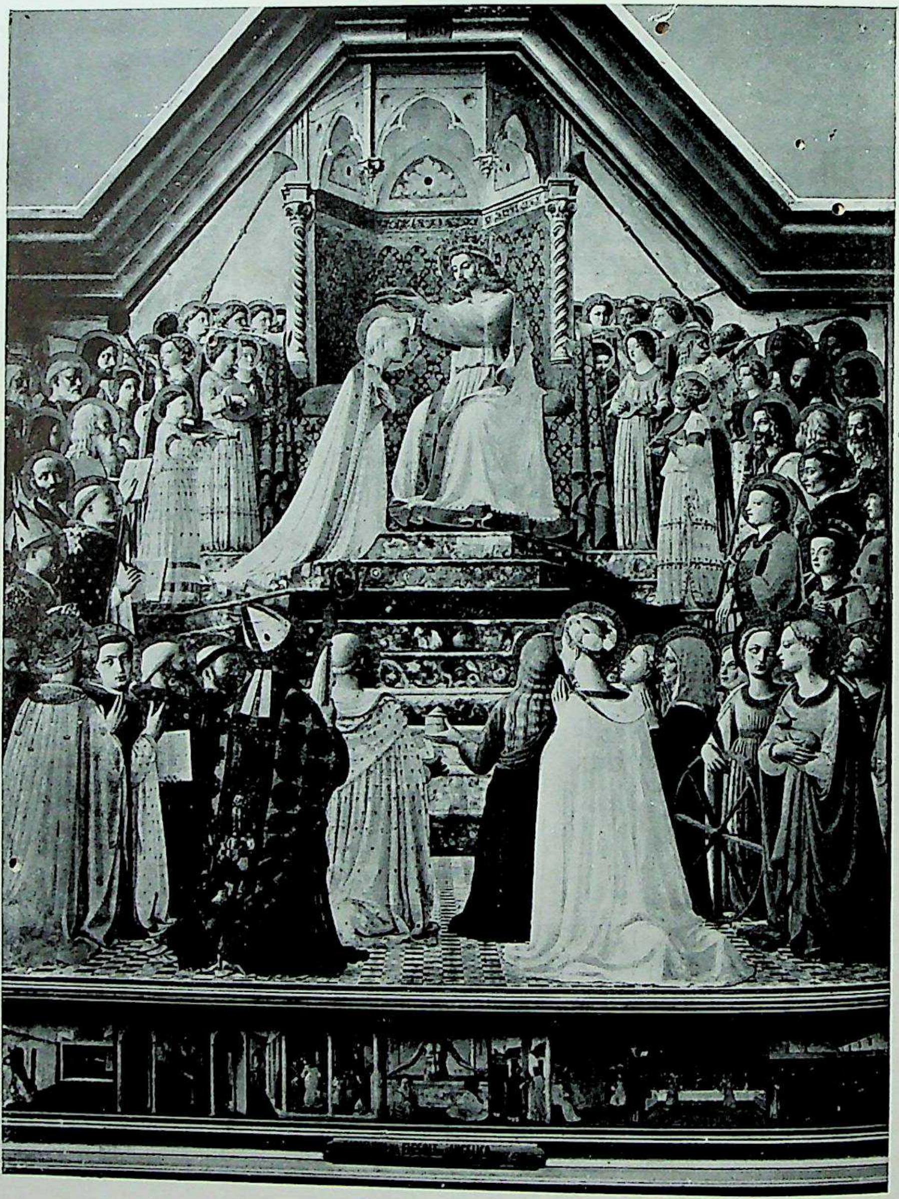
Uffizi, Florence

EARLY painting has a charm and quality peculiarly its own. In Italy, especially, where the earliest artists so successfully combined sincerity and quiet, earnest feeling with beauty of workmanship, there is much primitive work that to-day makes almost as strong an appeal as do the paintings of maturity. Anticipation and realization, the bud and the full bloom—the antithesis covers the whole history of art.

The Siena of 1333, the year in which Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi, his brother-in-law and assistant, in happy collaboration signed and dated their beautiful Annunciation, was already becoming famous for its painters. Thirty-three years before this Duccio's great "Maestà" had been carried in triumph to the Duomo, and Simone worthily upheld the great Sienese traditions of fine craftsmanship, exquisite finish and graceful inventiveness, for all its lack of virility and robustness. What each contributed to the picture is not known, but Memmi certainly received seventy florins for his part, which was probably limited to the laying on of the gold background.

The spacing under the carved wooden arches is skilfully filled. Of the two principal figures, that of the Madonna is less happily conceived. The suggestion of affrighted, trembling modesty, the expression of unworthiness before so brilliant an apparition, are well rendered, but the figure is awkwardly posed and the down-drawn corners of the mouth and the narrow eyes far from pleasing. Gabriel, on the other hand, is one of the most beautiful figures in early art. His hair wreathed with olive and an olive sprig in his hand, he gives the impression of having descended so swiftly, so lightly on his great errand as barely to brush the ground on which he has alighted. The picture has unfortunately been much injured, but more than enough remains to hold the eye entranced.

[*See p.* 18.



Louvre

CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

BY FRA ANGELICO

PLATE 2

FRA ANGELICO

CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1387-1485 Louvre

THIS picture, which, with its Predella, was painted for the monastery of S. Domenico at Fiesole before the monks, and Fra Angelico with them, moved to that of S. Marco at Florence, had already in the sixteenth century acquired merit, and was enthusiastically acclaimed by Vasari as a work "from the hand of a saint or of an angel" such as those represented in it. Yet when Napoleon brought it with other loot to Paris, it was actually banished to a cloak-room as a coloured drawing!

The throne, on which the lines of the picture converge, follows very closely in its design the Tabernacle of the Medici e Speziali, still to be seen on the south side of the Church of Or Sammichele in Florence. Meekly kneeling before a princely but benignant Christ, the Virgin receives the crown in the presence of a goodly company of saints. Here on the left are St. Dominic, patron saint of the monastery, St. Thomas Aquinas, Charlemagne in his crown of fleurs-de-lys, St. Nicholas with his golden balls; facing these we find St. Peter Martyr, St. Laurence, St. Catherine, St. Agnes, the Magdalen and a host of others. Flower-like angels, their wings star-spangled, their faces lighted with celestial fire, make music before the throne.

The colours are bright and clear, if somewhat hard, laid on with all the delicacy of a miniature in flat tones with no shadow, and, as Gautier wrote, are taken from "the white of the lily, the rose of the dawn, the blue of the sky and the gold of the stars." The plate-like haloes around the heads of the "Bienheureux" are of solid gold.

[*See p.* 18.

PLATE 3

STEPHAN LOCHNER

MADONNA WITH THE VIOLET

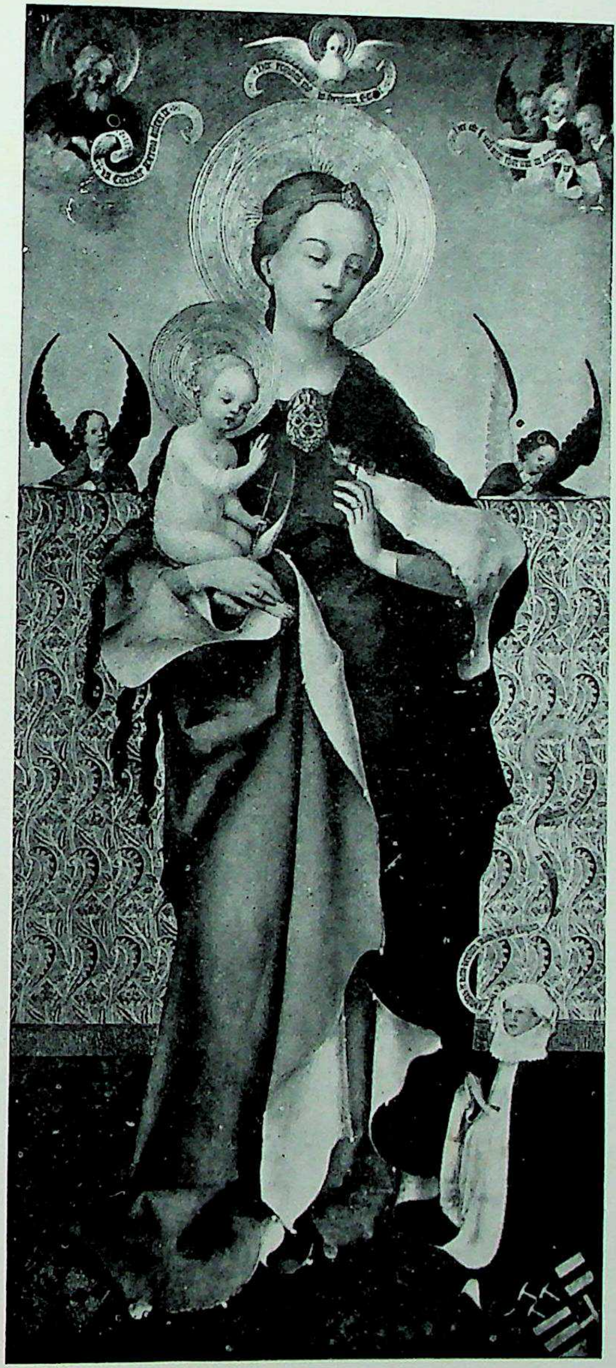
SCHOOL OF COLOGNE
Circa 1400–*circa* 1450

Archiepiscopal Museum
Cologne

THE master of the famous Dombild in the Cathedral of Cologne, for most critics agree in attributing the "Madonna with the Violet" to him, never painted a more charming version of the Virgin and Child than this serene, gracious presentment. The picture belongs to Lochner's early period, and must date from about 1430. Though the whole difference between north and south separates Lochner from his Florentine contemporary Fra Angelico, German from Italian, these two painters share something of the same gentle spirit and love of pure, gray, shadowless colour and sweet types.

This Madonna exhibits all Lochner's easily recognized characteristics, his rounded form of face, his soft blooming colour, his tender grace of expression, even his occasional lapses of draughtsmanship. The figure, for all its girlish *naïveté*, is almost monumental in pose, an impression enhanced by the broad, simple folds of the mantle, in marked contrast to the intricate patterning of the gold-brocaded curtain behind. There was nothing peculiar or unusual in the diminutive dimensions of the Abbess Elsa von Reichenstein, donor of the picture, who kneels at the Virgin's feet. Mediæval painting allowed itself the same liberty as to scale that has always been accorded to sculpture, where in the same decorative system figures of all sizes are introduced together, the principal actors of heroic proportions, while those of subsidiary interest are kept considerably smaller.

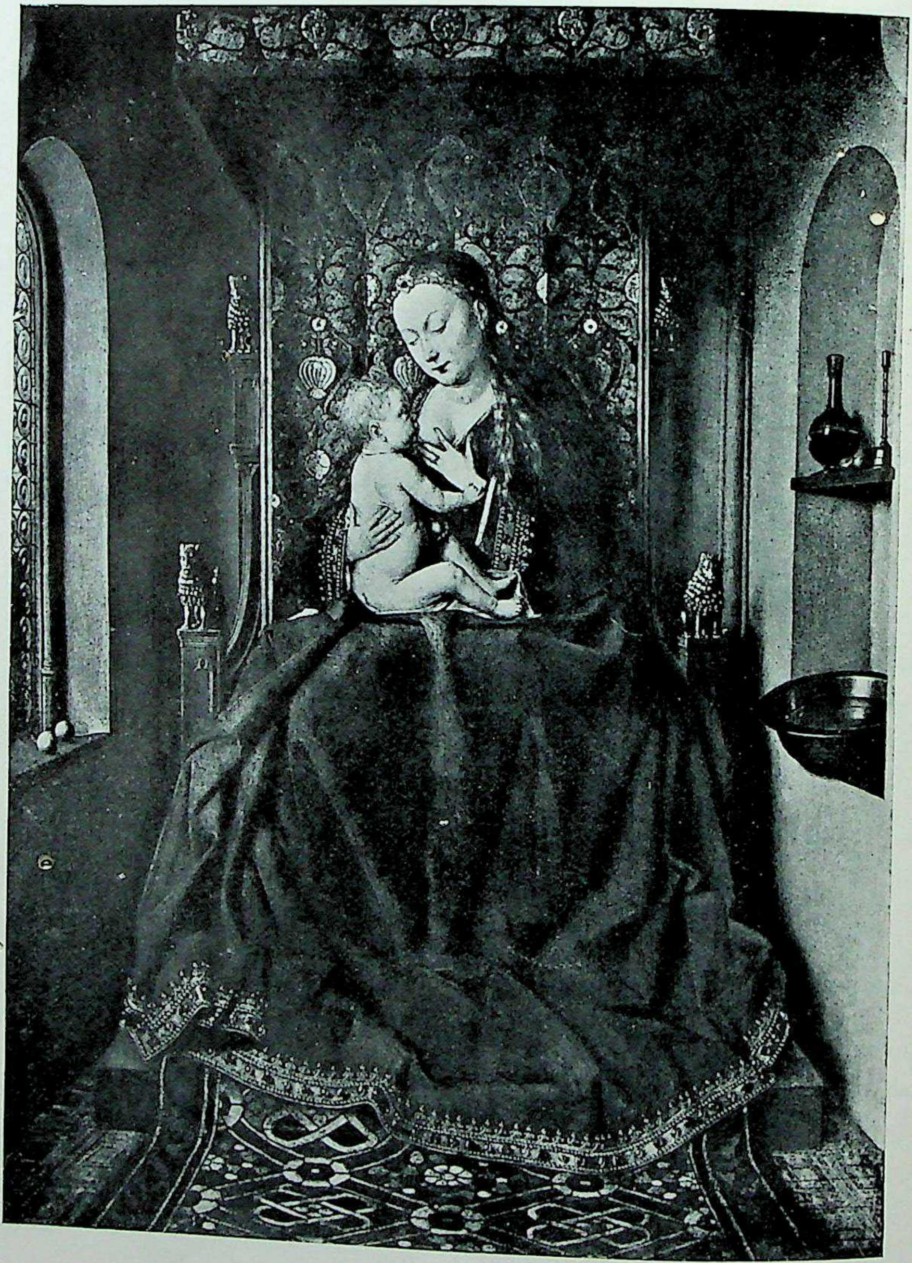
[*See p.* 18.



Archiepiscopal Museum, Cologne

MADONNA WITH THE VIOLET

BY STEPHAN LOCHNER



MADONNA AND CHILD
BY JAN VAN EYCK

Frankfort

PLATE 4

JAN VAN EYCK

MADONNA AND CHILD
("Madonna of Lucca")

Flemish School
Circa 1390–1440

Staedel Museum
Frankfort

It was characteristic of Jan van Eyck that he should bring his straightforward realism even into his sacred subjects. There is little grace in this awkward maiden, seated on a magnificent Gothic throne in a dimly-lighted chamber. The Child, too, with His wrinkled skin, is far from attractive. Yet here we find a stateliness and a quiet dignity independent of facial beauty, for which the Flemish painters, and Jan van Eyck in particular, cared little. The small eyes, the almost entire absence of eyebrow and eyelash, the high forehead from which the hair is strained back, are certainly, to our taste, not elements that make for beauty. But that this is indeed Madonna is testified by her sumptuous surroundings, the gold and jewels bordering her ample red robe, the fillet of pearls encircling her brow, the richly brocaded canopy of her throne, the Oriental carpet at her feet. Characteristic, too, of Jan van Eyck are the little touches of genre, the large brass basin, the water-bottle and candlestick on the shelf, the apples gathering up the light on the window-sill.

The colour of the panel is very deep and rich, from the Virgin's red robe to the blues and greens of the brocade and the warm tones of the carpet. This picture, in common with all the works of the Flemish school, is painted in the new oil and varnish medium, the great technical discovery given to the world by the van Eycks, an innovation which went far towards revolutionizing the art of painting. For this new medium allowed a richness and flow, a depth and transparency of colour unknown before.

[*See p.* 18.

PLATE 5

HUBERT VAN EYCK

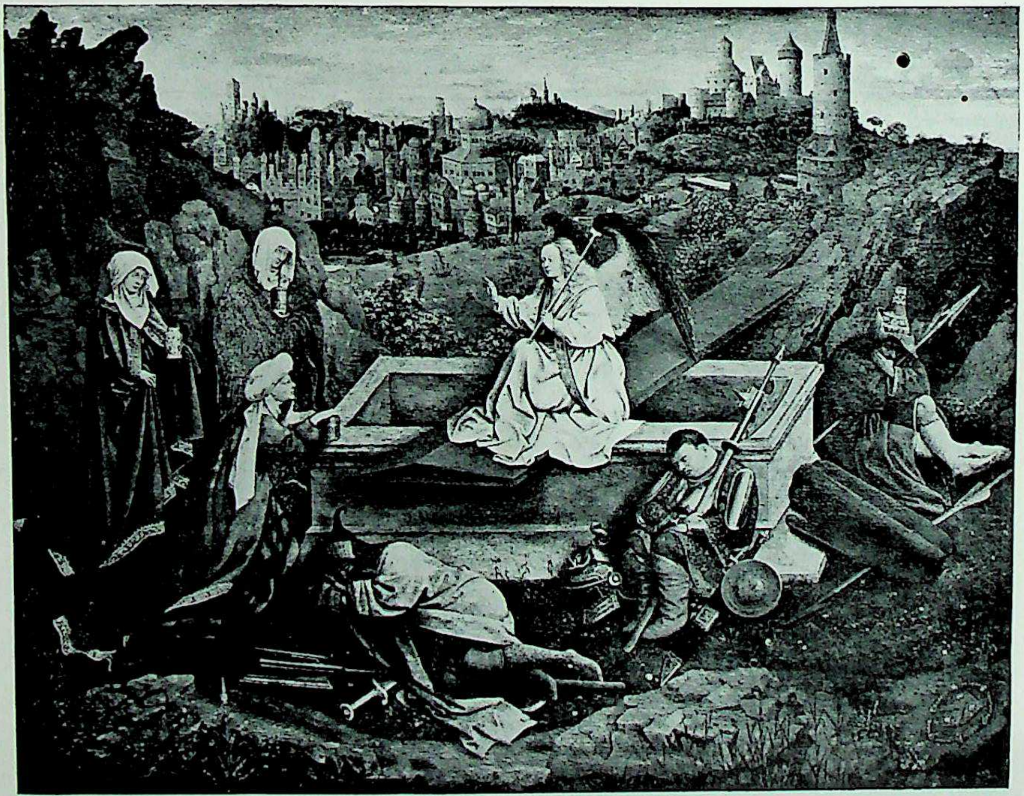
THE THREE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE

FLEMISH SCHOOL *Circa* 1370–1426	Collection of Sir Frederick Cook, Bart., Richmond

THE advanced criticism of recent times has attempted to distinguish between the works assigned to the van Eyck brothers. Hubert, the creator of the Ghent altar-piece, shows a strong feeling for beauty and grace, for a poetry and mysticism not revealed in the signed works of his younger, less imaginative brother. These qualities are strongly marked in this wonderfully solemn and impressive picture, in which the beauty of the landscape and lighting seem to hold us spellbound. It is the moment when twilight dispersed by dawn melts away before the unutterable glory of a new-born day. The sky is illumined with mysterious light bathing the whole atmosphere and touching into golden radiance the towers and mosques of distant Jerusalem. The empty tomb, the white-robed angel, the three women approaching with spices and ointments, all seem in harmony with the peace of the hour. The clownish guards, lost in heavy slumber, are rendered with true Flemish realism, which almost approaches caricature. It is the accurate delineation in the background of the features of Jerusalem that has given rise to the suggestion that Hubert himself pilgrimaged to the Holy City, and perhaps, though rather contrary to the habit of the time, painted this picture on the spot. The Hebrew inscription bordering the women's draperies, of which the words "In the land of Israel in the year . . ." have been deciphered, lends additional colour to this interesting theory.

[*See p.* 19.

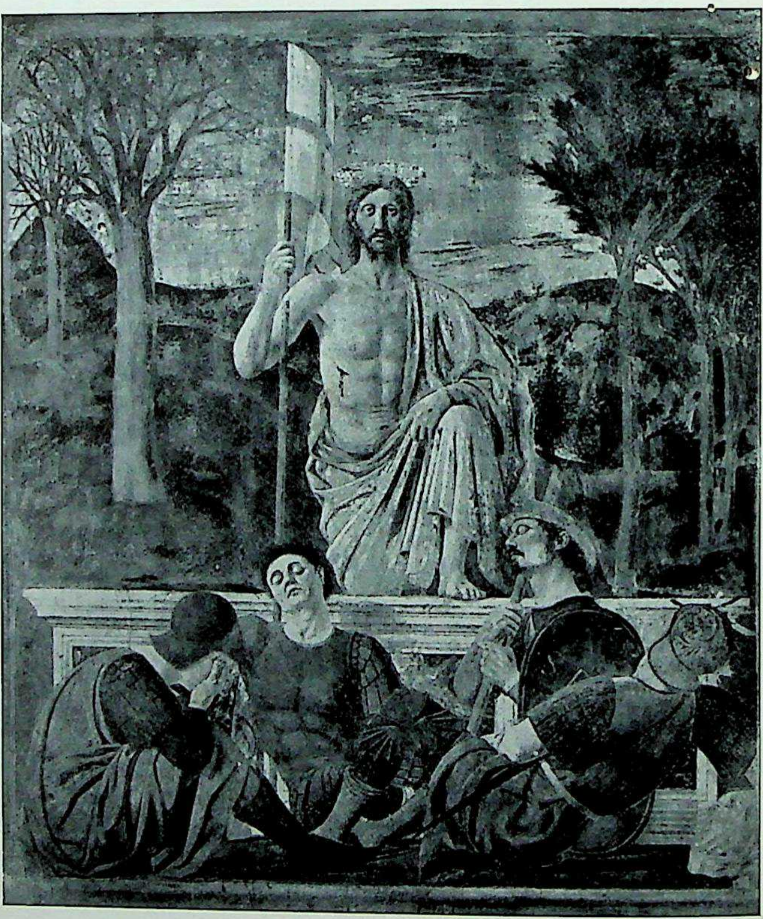
PLATE V



Sir Frederick Cook, Bart.

THE THREE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE

BY HUBERT VAN EYCK



Municipio, Borgo San Sepolcro

RESURRECTION

BY PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

PLATE 6

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

THE RESURRECTION

UMBRIAN SCHOOL, 1416–1492 Municipio, Borgo San Sepolcro

THOSE who have once seen this fresco of the "Resurrection," painted soon after 1460, will, writes J. A. Symonds, "never forget the deep impression of solitude and aloofness from all earthly things produced by it. It is not so much the admirable grouping and masterly drawing of the four sleeping soldiers, or even the majestic type of the Christ, emergent without effort from the grave, as the communication of a mood felt by the painter and instilled into our souls, that makes this by far the grandest, most poetic and most awe-inspiring picture of the Resurrection."

The simplicity of the triangular architectonic composition contributes to the imposing effect of this great wall-painting. The figure of Christ is superbly placed, the left foot planted firmly on the marble tomb, the straight classical lines of which harmonize with the severe folds of the drapery. It has been suggested that in the head of the soldier facing the spectator we have a portrait of the painter himself. The landscape background, treated with great breadth, displays bare hills dotted with trees, through whose delicate tracery the early morning sky gleams chill and clear, touching cypresses and planes with a wan pallor. Christ's rose-coloured drapery stands out in exquisite contrast against the grey-green earth and the cold blue sky at the horizon. There is almost a hint of *plein air* in the wonderful lighting of this fresco, and indeed Piero anticipated a later period of art in the interest he showed in the problems of light.

[*See p.* 19.

PLATE 7

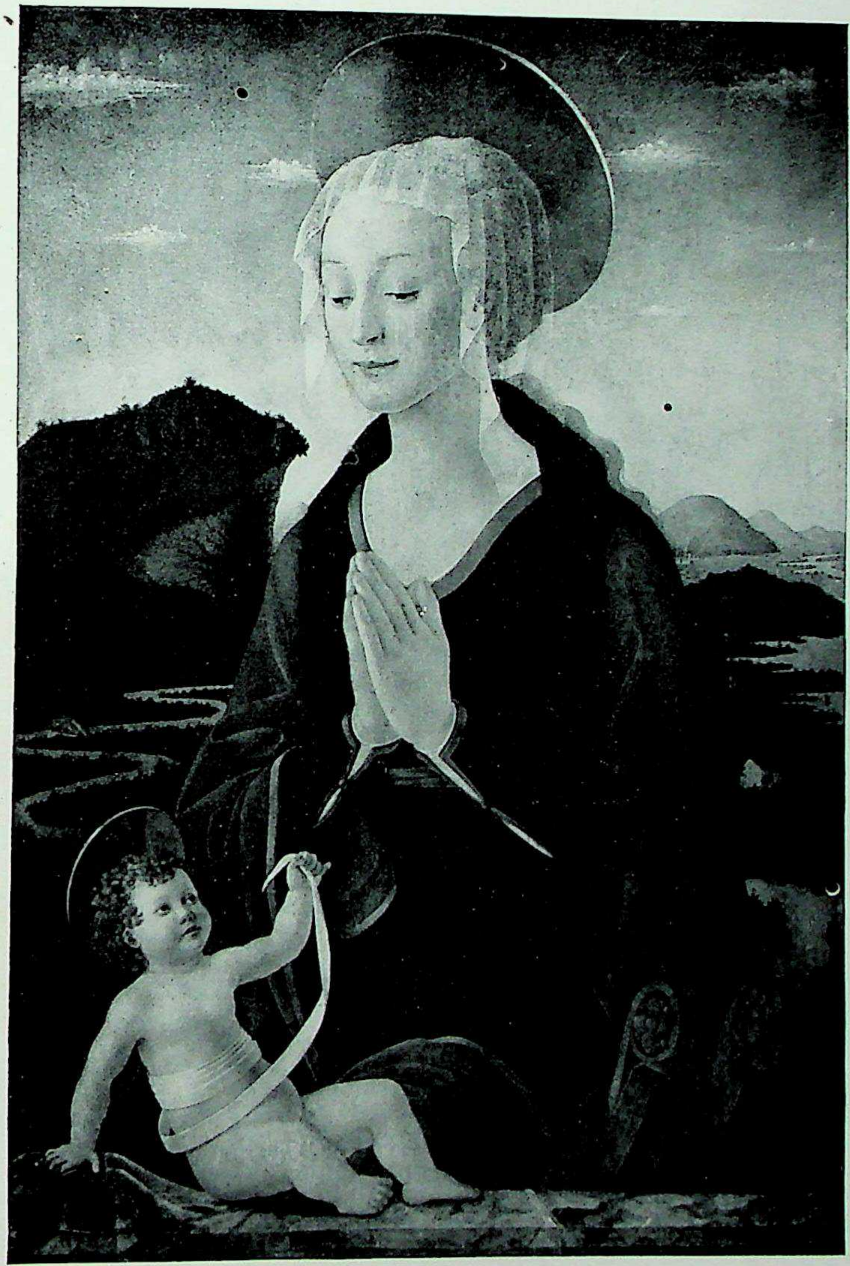
ALESSIO BALDOVINETTI

MADONNA AND CHILD

FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1427–1499 Louvre

THE name of Alessio Baldovinetti, master though he was of Ghirlandaio and perhaps of Verrocchio, has only of late, indeed since this picture was gathered to its long home in the Louvre, become famous. And yet even in Hogarth's day it was sufficiently well known to give point to his jest on the affectations of the critics of the time in his mocking reference to "the second and best manner of Baldovinetti."

The picture is an early work painted with all the undimmed freshness and enthusiasm of youth. In the Madonna, Baldovinetti has surpassed himself. The modelling is sufficient if not remarkable. The almost hieratic attitude is full of winning grace and tender reverence, the expression delicate and dainty, a little pensive too. The majestic poise of neck and hands accords with the simple folds of the cloak and headdress. Only in the Child, with its unnaturally small figure, so consciously playing with His binder, is there a touch of affectation—a hint of the precious. The chair with the roses carved on the arm was evidently a favourite property, for we find it again in Baldovinetti's altar-piece in the Uffizi. A curious feature which, if not unknown, is at least rare in Italian painting, is the treatment of the halo as a mirror in which the back of the head is reflected. That characteristic naturalism,



Louvre

MADONNA AND CHILD
BY BALDOVINETTI

which was eventually to stifle Baldovinetti's sense of the beautiful, here so predominant, shows in the receding landscape with its uncompromising mass of hill thrown up abruptly against the sky on the left, and the road ribboning its way across the plain to a far-off distance where the spacious sky melts into the horizon.

[*See p.* 19.

PLATE 8

PIETRO PERUGINO

CRUCIFIXION

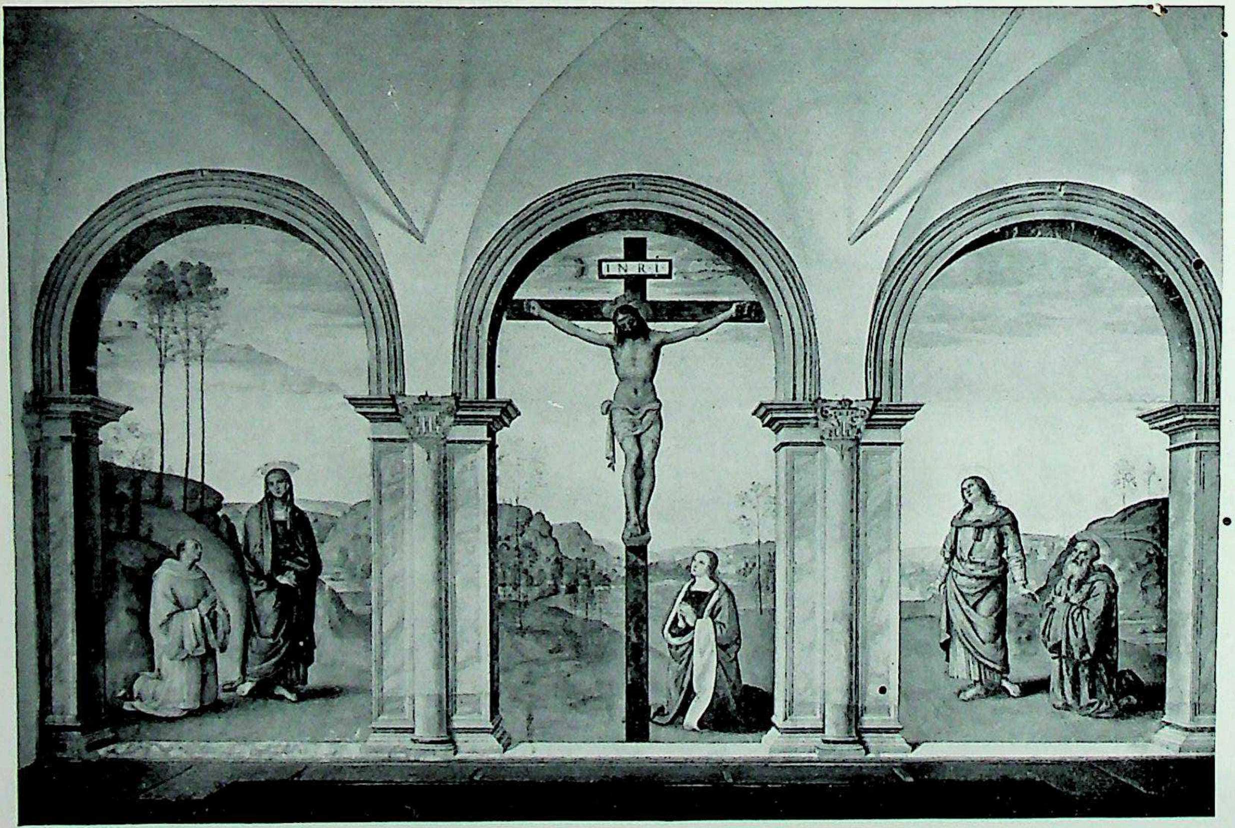
UMBRIAN SCHOOL
1446–1524

S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi
Florence

THE pupil of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, Perugino was in the prime of life when he undertook for fifty-five ducats to adorn the walls of this monastery-church for Pietro and Giovanni Pucci of Florence, a task completed in 1496. Never in the field of painting was so much achieved with means so seemingly simple. Six figures only fill the spacious arches, the Virgin and St. Bernard, St. John and St. Benedict on either hand, and in the centre Christ on the Cross with the kneeling Magdalen. The composition is measured and balanced, founded upon a broad-based triangle. The three groups separated by the pillars are brought together through the unity of the landscape beyond. There is beauty and dignity in the poses, but also just that touch of the studied which became in Perugino almost a convention. For though a master of delicious, melting colour and fervent expression, Perugino was no great draughtsman, and his figures seldom stand firmly upon their feet. There are, however, careful studies in the Uffizi for the Madonna and the crucified Christ of this fresco.

It is in the spacious expanse of sunlit Umbrian landscape that the glory and expressiveness of the picture reside. Just such wide vista of hill and valley may be seen to-day from any church tower in Perugia or Assisi. The

PLATE VIII



S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, Florence

CRUCIFIXION

BY PERUGINO

slight, feathery trees, beloved of the artist, are silhouetted against the transparent blue depth of the sky, flecked with light little clouds. Over all broods the hush of noontide and a reverential calm, attuning with the spirit of the great world-drama that is here being enacted. "The nobility of the figures, the striking gravity of the scene, the delicacy of the colouring, the perfection of the landscape, place this fresco in the front rank of Perugino's works in Italy" (Burckhardt).

[*See p.* 20.

PLATE 9

ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN

ALTAR-PIECE OF CHANCELLOR BLADELIN

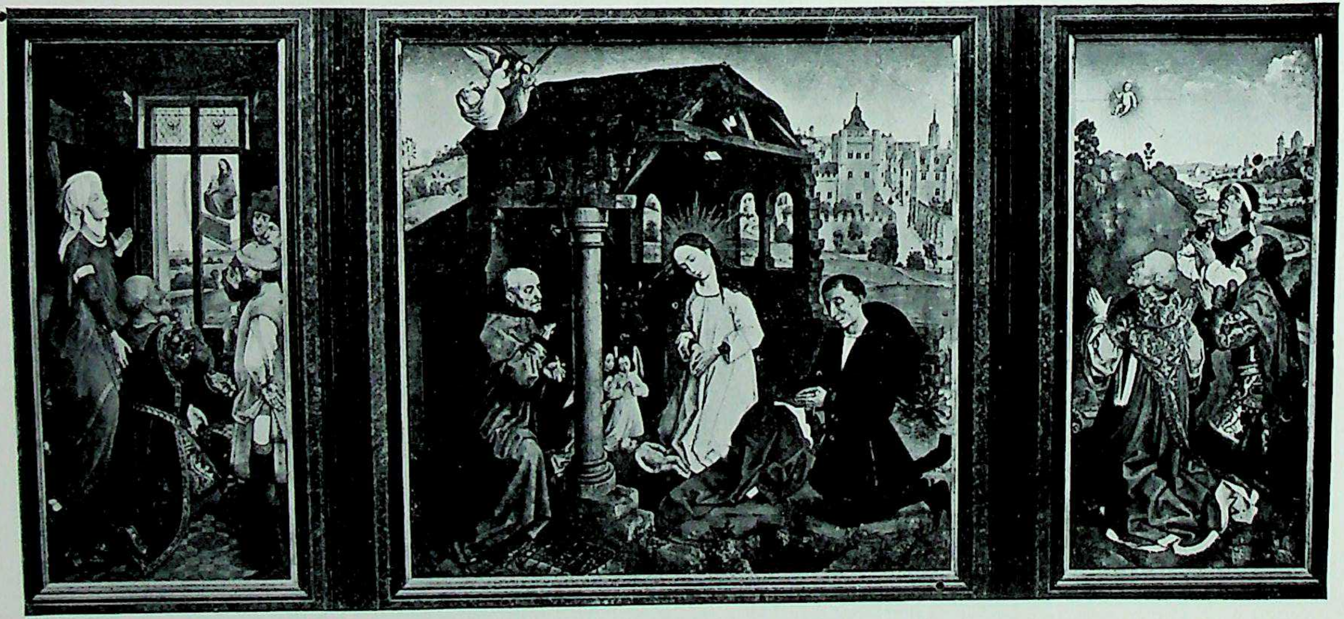
FLEMISH SCHOOL, *circa* 1399–1464 Berlin Museum

In Roger van der Weyden, as in Hubert van Eyck, the religious spirit which animated early German art is united with the realism and vigour so characteristic of Flemish painting. The Berlin Museum possesses three of Roger's triptychs, of which this, named after the donor, dates from about 1450, and is a particularly fine example of the artist's work as regards colour, composition, landscape and expression. Van der Weyden's colouring is clearer and flatter than that of the van Eycks, and here his use of a rich purple in conjunction with deep blue is extremely effective.

The central panel represents the Adoration of the new-born Child by the Virgin and Chancellor Bladelin, who in fur-bordered velvet doublet kneels in pious reverence for his features to be perpetuated, while the elderly St. Joseph challenges daylight with a small candle. The announcement of the birth of the Messiah to the rulers of East and West forms the subject of the wings. On the left the sibyl is directing the gaze of the Emperor Augustus to the apparition of the Madonna and Child seen through an open window. The Roman Emperor, ruler of the West, is arrayed in the garb of the Dukes of Burgundy, and his courtiers also appear in the Flemish costume of the painter's own day. The Annunciation to the kings of the East is the subject of the corresponding wing. Here in a green valley kneel the three kings in amazed adoration before the guiding star, which appears to them in the form of a child radiating light.

[*See p.* 20.

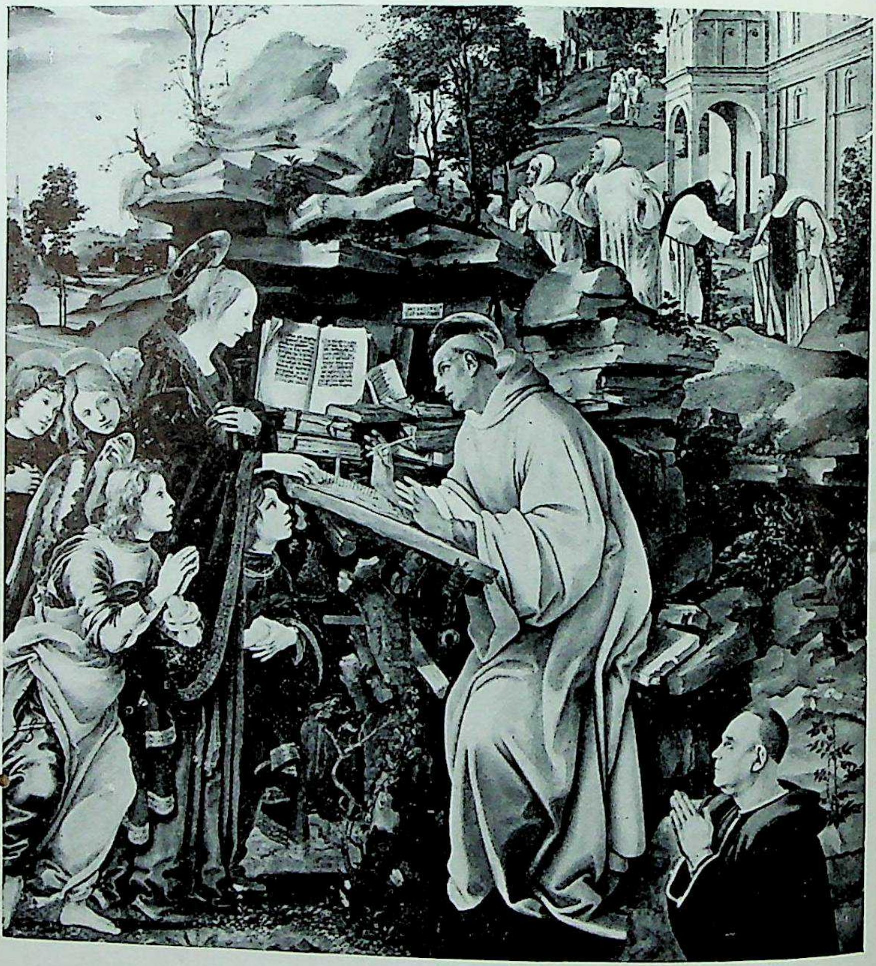
PLATE IX



Berlin

ALTARPIECE OF CHANCELLOR BLADELIN

BY ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN



Badia, Florence

MADONNA APPEARING TO ST. BERNARD

BY FILIPPINO LIPPI

PLATE 10

FILIPPINO LIPPI

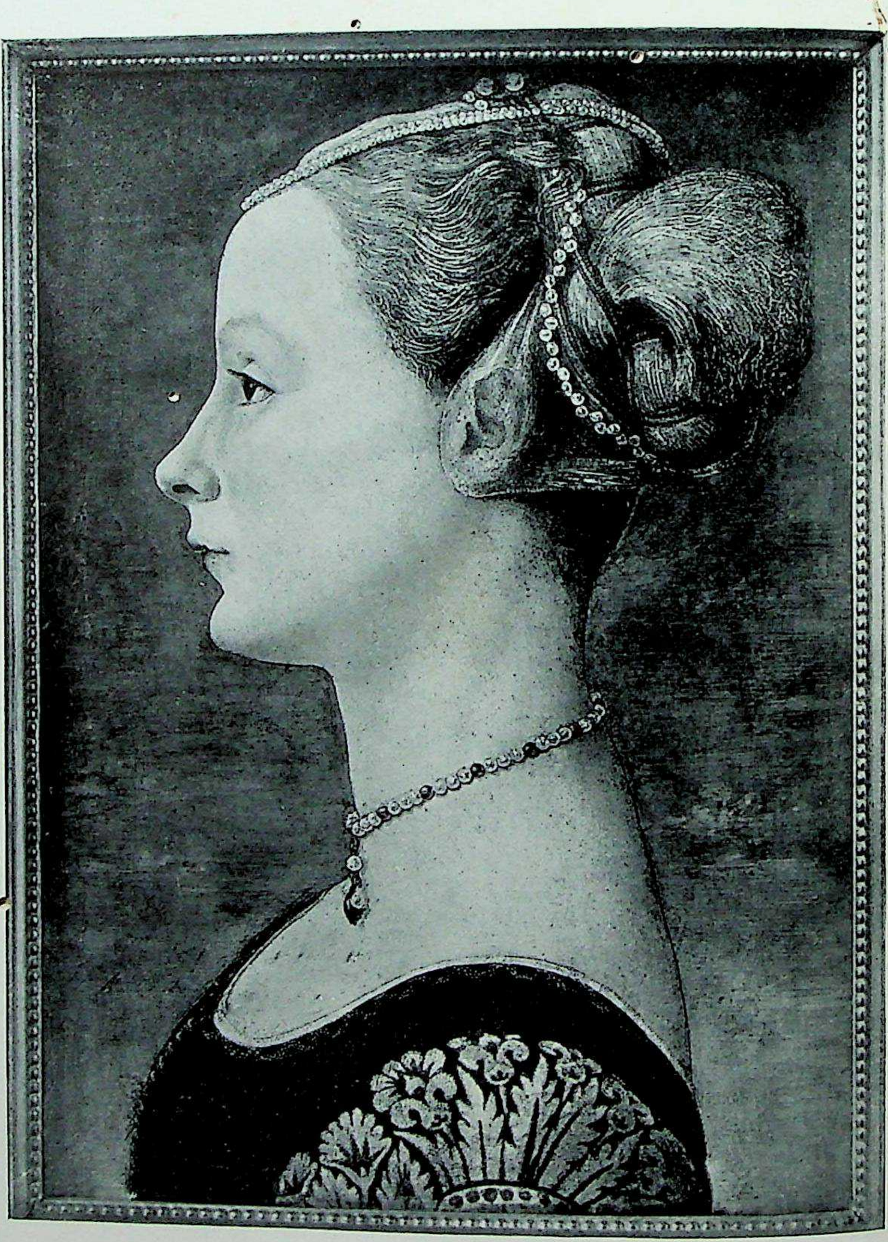
MADONNA APPEARING TO ST. BERNARD

FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1457–1504 Badia, Florence

THIS delightful picture was painted soon after 1480, when Filippino was little more than a youth. Studies by the artist for it may be found in the Uffizi. The influence of Filippino's father and master, Filippo Lippi, whose infinitely less attractive version of the same subject hangs in the National Gallery, is still strongly marked, and in the charming boy-angels a resemblance to the angels of Botticelli, Filippino's fellow-pupil, is not far to seek. The Virgin, gracious and benignant, has just swept down from heaven bringing strength and comfort to St. Bernard. His weary face, bent over the great manuscript, is illuminated with ecstatic rapture as the subject of his writings appears to him in bodily form. Under the rocks, to the right, lurk two chained demons, the attributes of the Saint. Above, the Saint is again seen, kneeling in prayer, while his brother monks perform a miracle of healing.

It is rather as a collection of exquisitely beautiful passages than as a great harmonious whole that the picture makes its appeal. Of composition either in form or colour there is practically none. The Saint appears in two incidents in the same picture, and the donor, Piero del Pugliese, is thrust unceremoniously into a corner. The masses are somewhat awkwardly balanced, being uncomfortably crowded on the left. There is no true pictorial centre, the incidents and details jostling one another to their own undoing. The colours, too, are not well distributed, the warm tints massed together in warring confusion on the one side, to convey perhaps the effect of a vision of brightness entering upon a world of monochrome. The condition of the panel is far from perfect, owing to repainting. Yet with all its technical limitations it is as charming a piece of fifteenth-century art as even Florence could produce.

[*See p.* 20.



PORTRAIT OF A LADY
BY VERROCCHIO (?)

Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan

PLATE 11

A. VERROCCHIO (?)

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1435–1488 Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan

As to the authorship of this beautiful portrait of an elegant young Italian lady the battle of the critics has raged loud and long, and the issue is still in doubt. Quite a number of these fifteenth-century profile-portraits are in existence, some attributed to Piero della Francesca or other pupils of Domenico Veneziano. This one has been claimed tentatively by Mr. Berenson for Verrocchio, the sculptor-painter in whose *bottega* Leonardo was trained.

The flat treatment and firm outline of the features, clear cut as a cameo against a background of soft blue, recall the delicate portrait-medals by Pisanello and his contemporaries. The bold largeness of the design has something, too, in common with the strong square busts in coloured wood or marble executed by the Florentine sculptors. The very directness and apparent simplicity of this treatment constitute a great part of its charm. The modelling is as delicate and subtle as are the flesh tones of face and neck. Above all, the hair, the crowning glory of the head, is a tissue of gold threads, twined and plaited in rippling waves and tender curves that soften the severity of the general effect. The long line of neck is happily broken by a necklace of simple beads. For colour there are the crimson sleeve and the deep green of the bodice, which is echoed in the ribbon fastening the hair.

[*See p.* 20.

PLATE 12

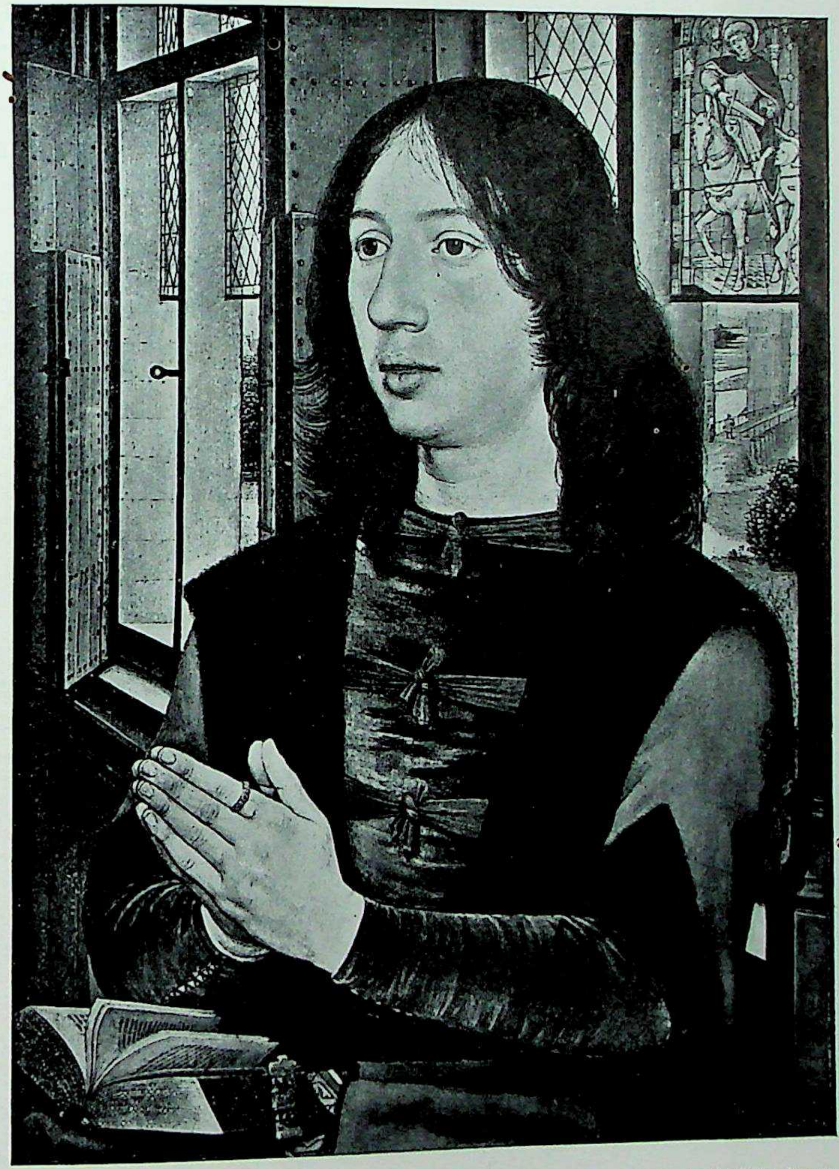
HANS MEMLINC

PORTRAIT OF MARTIN VAN NIEUWENHOVE

FLEMISH SCHOOL
Circa 1430–1520

Hospital of St. John
Bruges

THIS portrait of a young man forms the left wing of a diptych, the other half of which represents the Virgin and Child. As a portrait painter Memlinc is less literal and more sympathetic than Jan van Eyck, reading something of his own gentle spirit into the faces of his sitters. Martin van Nieuwenhove, who is depicted here, was a member of a noble family in Bruges, and when in 1487 he sat to Memlinc for this portrait was only twenty-three years of age. He is standing in a room with his hands reverently folded in the presence of the Virgin on the opposite panel. His dress is rich, as beseems his station. The light-brown coat faced with black opens to reveal a vest and sleeves of an exquisite pinkish-purple velvet, very deep in colour and toning with the woodwork of the background. Behind him in the stained-glass window appears his Patron, St. Martin, in red cloak and mauve tunic, mounted upon a white horse against a background of blue, the beggar hobbling beside him. Through the open window below we have one of those delicious little glimpses of clear landscape which add a gaiety and charm to so many of Memlinc's pictures. A river winds from the distant blue through the bright-green valley, swans floating majestically upon its surface, as you may see them to this day upon



Hospital of St. John, Bruges

PORTRAIT OF MARTIN VAN NIEUWENHOVE

BY MEMLINC

the canals at Bruges. Figures are passing across the bridge that spans the river, and considering that the whole picture measures only a few square inches, and that this little patch of landscape occupies but a tiny corner of it, it is marvellous that the artist who could paint a portrait with such breadth and vigour should be capable also of such delicate minuteness of treatment.

[*See p.* 21.

PLATE 13

JAN VAN EYCK

PORTRAITS OF JEAN ARNOLFINI AND HIS WIFE

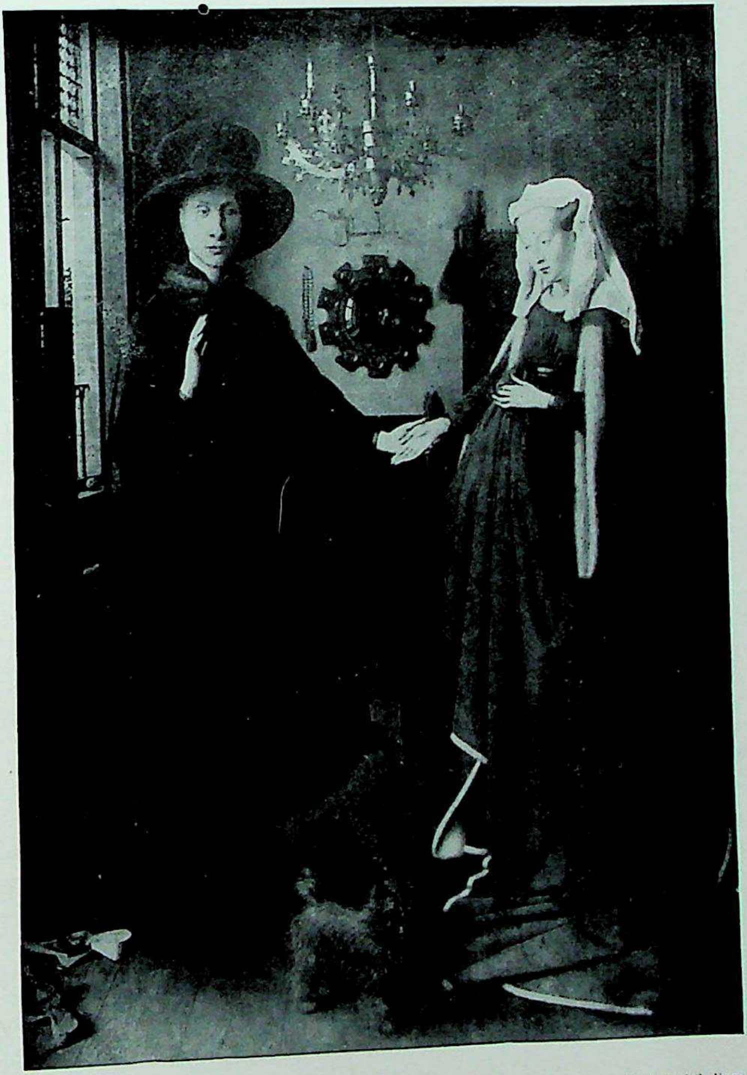
FLEMISH SCHOOL
Circa 1390–1440

National Gallery

IF Jan van Eyck lacked something of his brother Hubert's religious fervour and poetic imagination, he was surpassed by none in his power of rendering with literal accuracy the scene before him. This wonderful little interior with its double portrait, one of the gems of the National Gallery, may fairly claim to be his *chef-d'œuvre.*

Here stand Jean Arnolfini and his wife Jeanne de Chenay with hands gravely joined in the middle of a small room softly lighted from a latticed window on the left. Both are arrayed in their robes of state, the man in furred purple cloak and vast beaver hat which threatens to extinguish him, his wife in a heavy green cloth dress lined with fur. These massive draperies with their stiff and voluminous folds are a characteristic feature of early Flemish and German pictures, in marked contrast to the slight simple lines of Florentine draperies.

Jan van Eyck's aim has here gone beyond the mere presentment of the man and woman who stood before him so solemnly to the problem of painting an interior which should be more than a mere background to his figures. The room is filled with subdued glowing light, which plays on the red curtains of the stately bed on the right, and illumines the cool grey wall at the end, where hangs the



National Gallery

JEAN ARNOLFINI AND HIS WIFE

BY JAN VAN EYCK

marvellous mirror with its ten miniatures let into the frame, and its faithful reflection of the scene. Every touch is of interest, from the oranges, which glow as the light from the window falls upon them, and the little glimpses of a cherry-tree in fruit seen through the open casement, to the wooden pattens and scarlet slippers and the strip of Turkey carpet, and last, but not least, the wire-haired spaniel in the foreground.

[*See p.* 21.

PLATE 14.

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO.

DEATH OF S. FINA

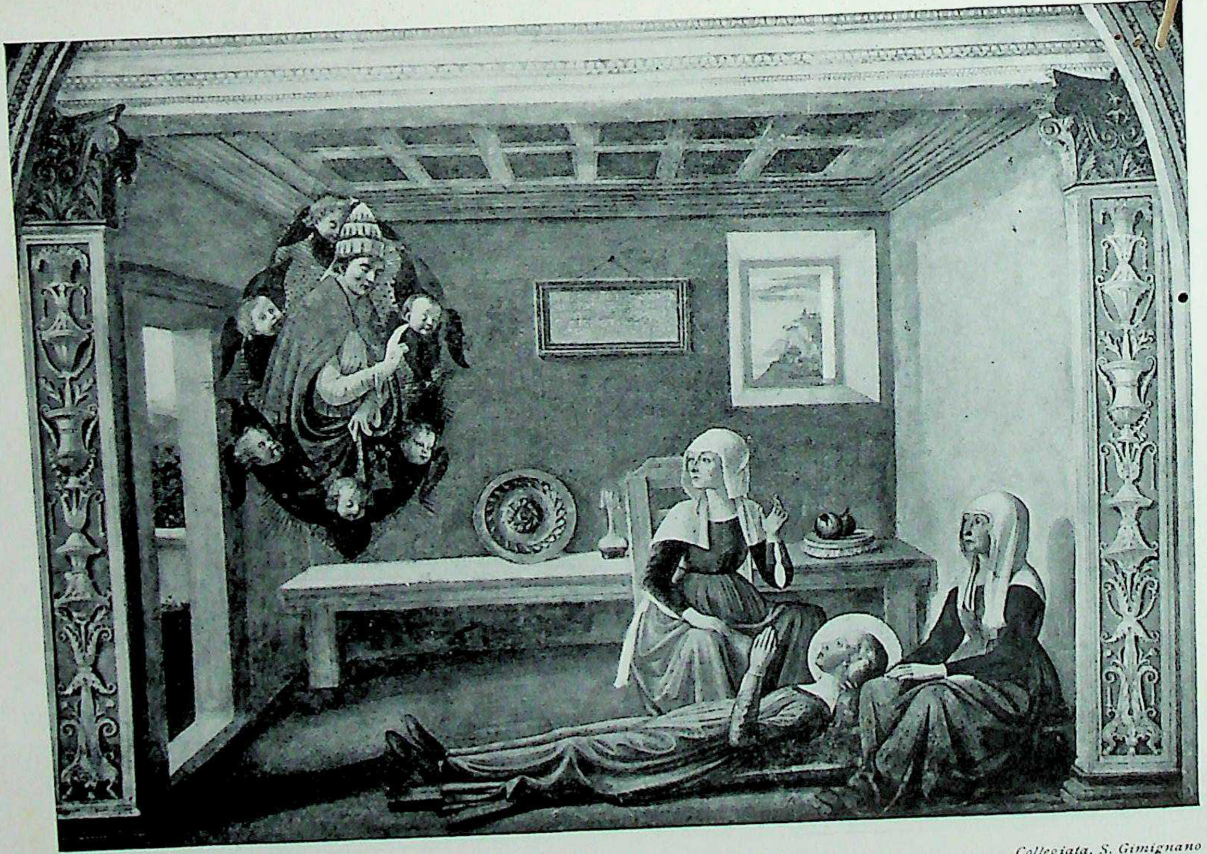
FLORENTINE SCHOOL
1446–1494

Collegiata
S. Gimignano

AMONG the earliest works of Ghirlandaio are the two frescoes of the death and burial of S. Fina which adorn the chapel dedicated to the Saint in the Collegiate Church of S. Gimignano, a work in which he was assisted by the local painter Mainardi.

As a reward for five years of patient suffering and ceaseless good works among the poor of her native hill-town, there appears to S. Fina the kindly Pope St. Gregory, to bestow a final blessing before she passes away. The Pope himself, according to the simple fashion of the day, is a somewhat massive half-length figure, borne aloft without effort by six of the most perfectly human cherubs known to art. The low square room with its panelled ceiling has for sole furniture a long oak table, a chair, a stool and a plank-bed out of whose hard boards flowers are springing beneath the shoulders of the Saint. For ornament, there are a framed inscription in Latin on the wall announcing her coming death and an embossed brass plate. A decanter of wine and some pomegranates may be seen on the table. But the open door gives upon a rose-garden, and through a small window we catch a glimpse of lovely landscape, hills, trees, a winding stream and delicate summer sky of marvellous beauty. The faithful nurse Beldia and the other attendant, both in quaint white head-dresses, gaze in solemn awe at the vision, their figures and the objects on the table patterning delightfully against the quiet cool colour of the walls.

[*See p.* 21.



Collegiata, S. Gimignano

DEATH OF S. FINA

BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO

PLATE XV

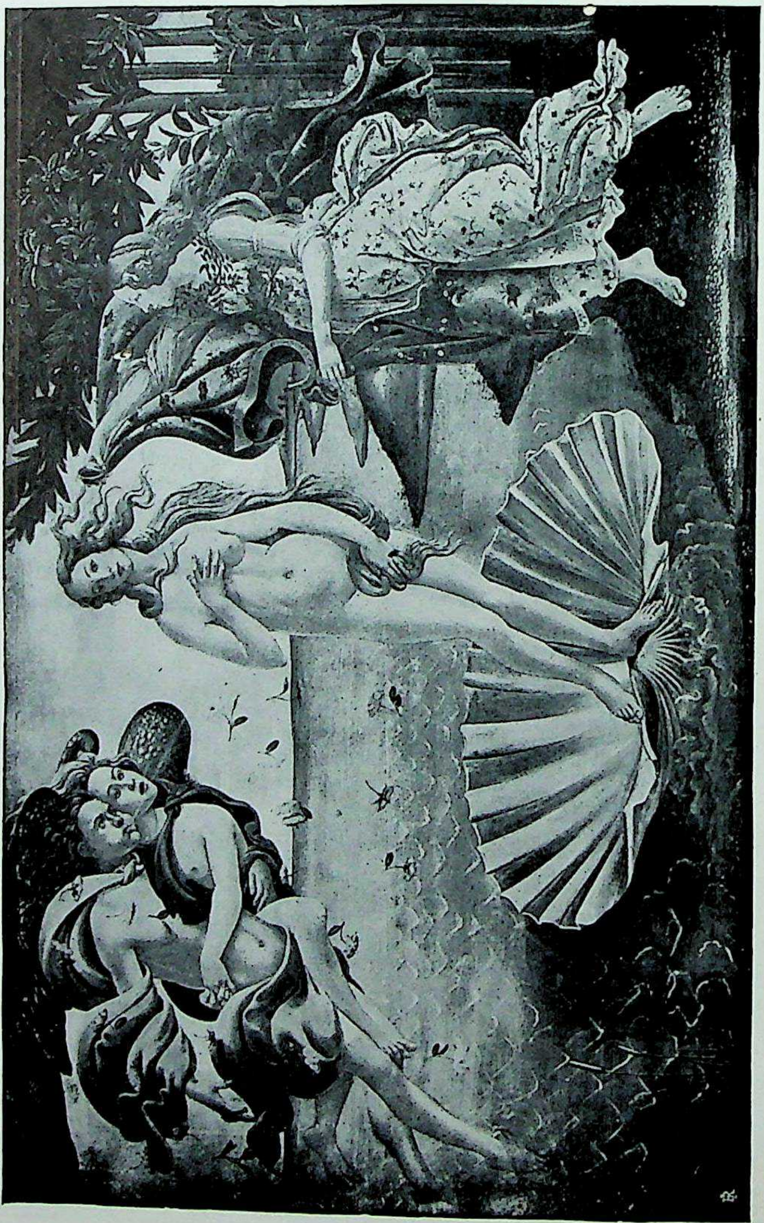


Photo. Anderson

BIRTH OF VENUS

BY BOTTICELLI

Uffizi

PLATE 15

A. BOTTICELLI

BIRTH OF VENUS

FLORENTINE SCHOOL
1446–1510

Uffizi, Florence

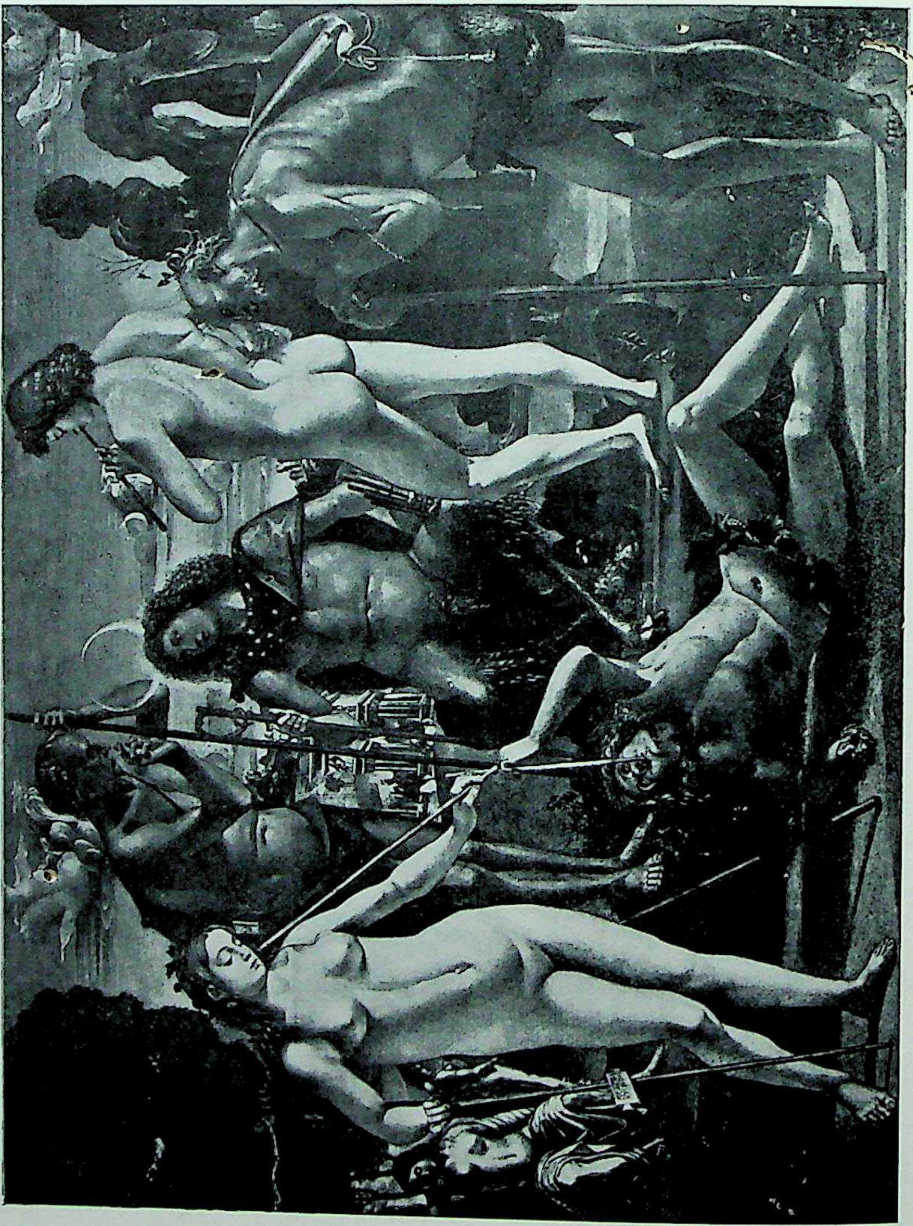
INSPIRED by Politian, the poet of that delightful company which used to forgather at Fiesole at the summer plaisaunce of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Botticelli has here set himself to paint a poem of his own. The choice of the moment is felicity itself. The Goddess of Pleasure, a slender figure beautifully outlined against the delicate tones of sky and sea, floats lightly upon a shell. Twin Zephyrs, their limbs interlaced, are wafting her gently over the foam towards the laurel-fringed shores of Cyprus, where a nymph in delicate draperies spangled with blue cornflowers waits to cover her with a crimson cloak sewn with daisies.

The draughtsmanship and the mastery of form throughout are consummate. Each detail has been scrupulously selected. Everywhere is deliberate decorative intention, the curves of the shell being repeated in the crisply dancing waves, those of the shore in the proffered mantle.

"A grey translucent sea laps silently upon a little creek, and in the hush of a still dawn the myrtles and sedges on the water's brim are quiet. It is a dream in half-tones that he gives us, grey and green and steely blue; and just that and some homely magic of his own hint the commerce of another world with man's discarded domain. . . . So here it comes upon you suddenly that you have surprised nature's self at her mysteries; you are let into the secret; you have caught the spirit of the April woodland as she glides over the pasture to the copse. And that indeed was Sandro's fortune. He caught her just in such a propitious hour. He saw the sweet wild thing pure and undefiled by touch of earth, caught her in that pregnant pause of time ere she had lighted. Another moment and a buxom nymph of the grove would fold her in a rosy mantle, coloured as the earliest wood anemones are" (Maurice Hewlett).

[*See p.* 22.

PLATE XVI



Berlin

THE SCHOOL OF PAN

BY SIGNORELLI

PLATE 16

LUCA SIGNORELLI

THE SCHOOL OF PAN

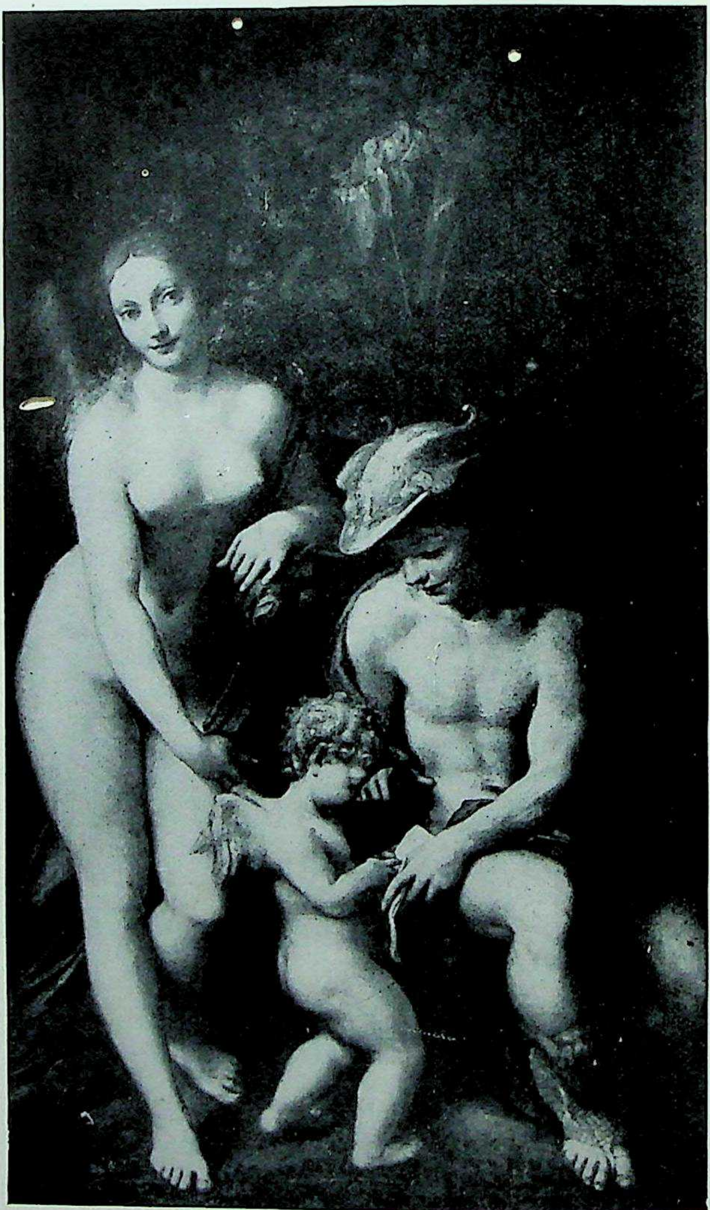
UMBRIAN SCHOOL, 1441–1523 Berlin Museum

"PAN as God of Natural Life and Master of Music with his Attendants" is the proud title assigned to Signorelli's magnificent idyll by its possessors. The picture was painted between 1480 and 1490, and is mentioned by Vasari as having been "molto commendato."

The bronze-coloured god, crowned with the crescent moon and seated on a knoll against the pink western sky in an attitude of listening, lets his pipes lie idle on his knee. The long level rays of the setting sun illumine his golden hair. A stalwart young god stands before him playing vigorously on his flute, and the vine-wreathed youth extended on the greensward at his feet pipes to the same strain, while Echo delicately raises her reed to her lips. Two aged but robust shepherds, leaning on their staves, present in their weather-beaten toughness an austere contrast to the godlike adolescence of these Olympian beings.

The picture has indeed little chromatic charm, for unlike the Venetian painters Signorelli had no feeling for the poetry of rich and glowing colour. Nor does he achieve his end by subtle rendering of light and shadow as did Correggio. His composition speaks in the language of line and plastic form. The tone of the whole is dull and leaden, the only colour being the dark blue sky with pink sunset glow and the green grass spotted with red flowers. The flesh is dark brown and rather leathery in texture, with sharply accentuated lights and shades. Only Echo and the standing god are fair, with greenish flesh tints and pink high lights. But, for these defects, the vigorous methods used to remove superfluous draperies, with which some eighteenth-century prude had invested the nude forms, are largely responsible, much of the surface of the flesh-painting being lost in the process, exposing the green underpaint.

[*See p.* 22.



National Gallery

MERCURY INSTRUCTING CUPID

BY CORREGGIO

PLATES

PLATE 17

CORREGGIO

MERCURY INSTRUCTING CUPID IN THE PRESENCE OF VENUS

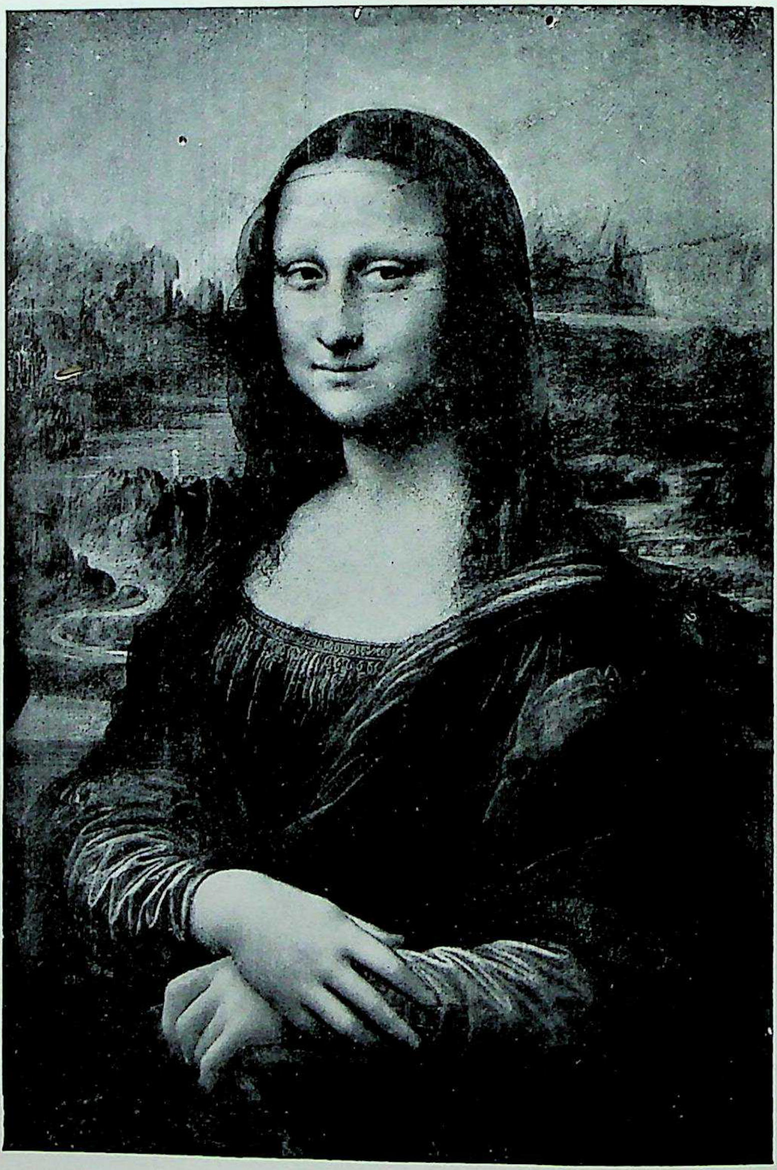
SCHOOL OF PARMA, 1494–1534 National Gallery

THIS delightful episode from the domestic life of the Gods reveals Correggio as the supreme exponent of flesh-painting. As Vasari put it, "His carnations did not seem to be painted but to be truly the living flesh." In spite of the injuries the picture has suffered in the course of its many wanderings, in spite also of retouching, something of the pearly quality of the flesh tones remains to hint of the beauties that have flown. Painted in 1522, it became the property of the Duke of Mantua, and later of our Charles I. Afterwards it travelled from one capital of Europe to another, until, early in the history of the National Gallery, it came there to rest.

The figures, nearly life-size, are finely thrown up against a wood of deep green foliage, so thick as to exclude any glimpse of sky. Venus is the typical woman seen by Correggio alike in Madonna and Goddess, but here, curiously enough, she has been provided with a pair of wings. Mercury, a robust manly figure, by no means the alert classical type of the swift god, is seated upon a tree-stump teaching little Cupid his letters. The Uffizi possesses a small study for this Mercury. But the most charming creation is that of the little curly-headed boy in an attitude of earnest concentration, following with a fat forefinger the lesson in the book. "His little wings," says Mengs, "are like those of newly-fledged chickens, which show the growth of the sprouting quills and the skin below."

The wonderful sensuous charm of the picture lies largely in the broad massing of light and shade, in which all local colour is drowned. Even "the forms seem to be moulded by the light which plays over and above them." Correggio painted with light as others have painted with colour, and in this respect he was one of the most original of artists.

[*See p.* 23.



Louvre

PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA

BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

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PLATE 18

LEONARDO DA VINCI

PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA, LA GIOCONDA

FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1452–1519 Louvre

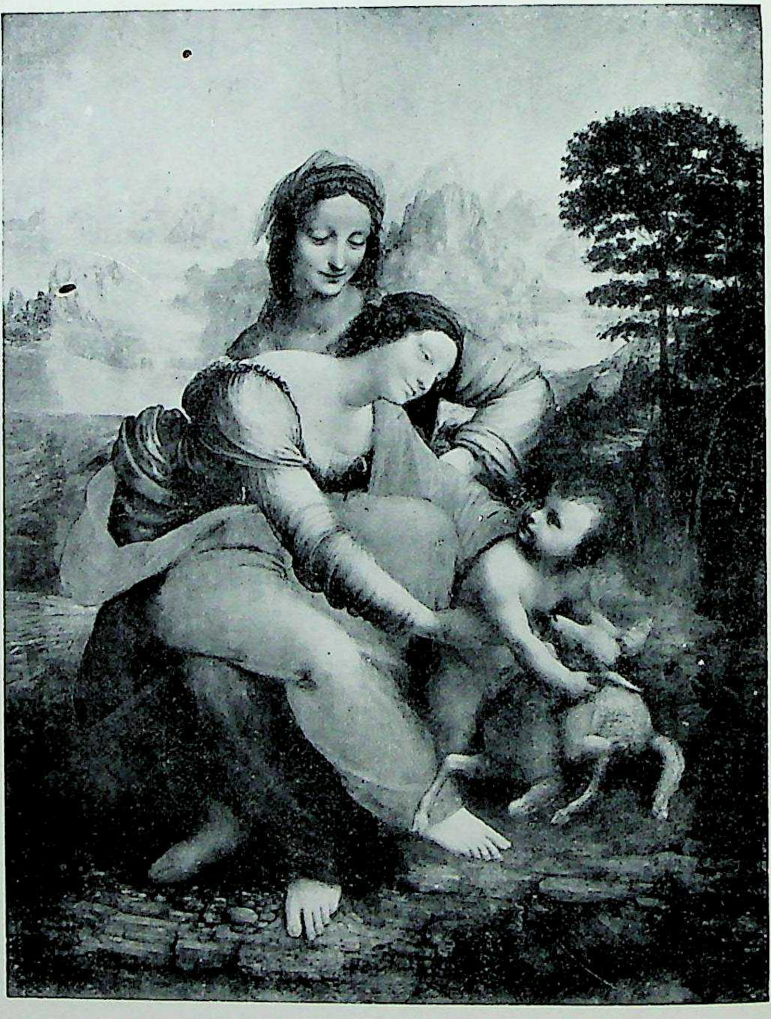
IT was in the early years of the sixteenth century that "Leonardo undertook to paint for Francesco del Giocondo the portrait of Mona Lisa his wife," a labour which was to engross the artist for the next four years. "La Gioconda," writes Walter Pater in his sympathetic appreciation, "is in the truest sense Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his thought and work. In suggestiveness only the "Melancholia" of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure set in its marble chair in that circle of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least."

For its beauty is not that of form and colour alone; indeed the paint is sadly cracked, the flesh tints have flown, especially from the face, leaving it with a wan pallor, and the landscape is but a blue-green spectre of its past glory. But the soul that looks out through the windows of those melting eyes is what the painter sought to perpetuate. It is the "smile of inward bliss" which he has immortalized, creating indeed "the portrait of a subtle, shadowy, uncertain smile," the expression of the ideal beauty for which he was always searching.

"Historic, sidelong, implicating eyes,
A smile of velvet's lustre on the cheek;
Calm lips the smile leads upward; hand that lies
Glowing and soft, the patience in its rest
Of cruelty that waits and doth not seek
For prey; a dusky forehead and a breast
Where twilight touches ripeness amorously:
Behind her, crystal rocks, a sea and skies
Of evanescent blue on cloud and creek;
Landscape that shines suppressive of its zest
For those vicissitudes by which men die."

MICHAEL FIELD

[*See p.* 23.



Louvre

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ST. ANNE
BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

PLATE 19

LEONARDO DA VINCI

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ST. ANNE

FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1452–1519 Louvre

LEONARDO DA VINCI has been styled by J. A. Symonds the Wizard of the Renaissance. "To him the Renaissance offers her mystery and lends her magic." Through the veil of his curious and versatile temperament he saw always what was remote, bizarre, elusive. Ever exploring into the innermost secrets of nature, he evolved for himself an art which contains a suggestion of a beauty almost unearthly in its expressive subtlety.

Here, as in the famous "Madonna of the Rocks," there is nothing conventional in the attitudes or in the magnificent design. The Virgin, seated on the lap of St. Anne, her mother, stretches out her arms to her chubby Child, who has struggled from them to play with His lamb. Did Leonardo intend in this a hint of symbolism, the mother catching at her Child to separate it from the Lamb of Sacrifice signifying the Passion? Strangely unreal and entirely Leonardesque is the landscape setting — the exquisitely painted shells and stones on the sea-shore, the high splintered rocks hemming in pools of sky-reflecting water. Into the blue of this background melts the soft blue of the Virgin's dress, spoiled and spotted as it is, and the grey of St. Anne's sleeve, while in contrast the ground and the tree on the right are of a warm brown.

It is interesting to compare this picture with the beautiful cartoon of the Virgin and Child with St. Anne and the Baptist which is one of the chief treasures of the all too little known Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy.

[*See p.* 23.

PLATE 20

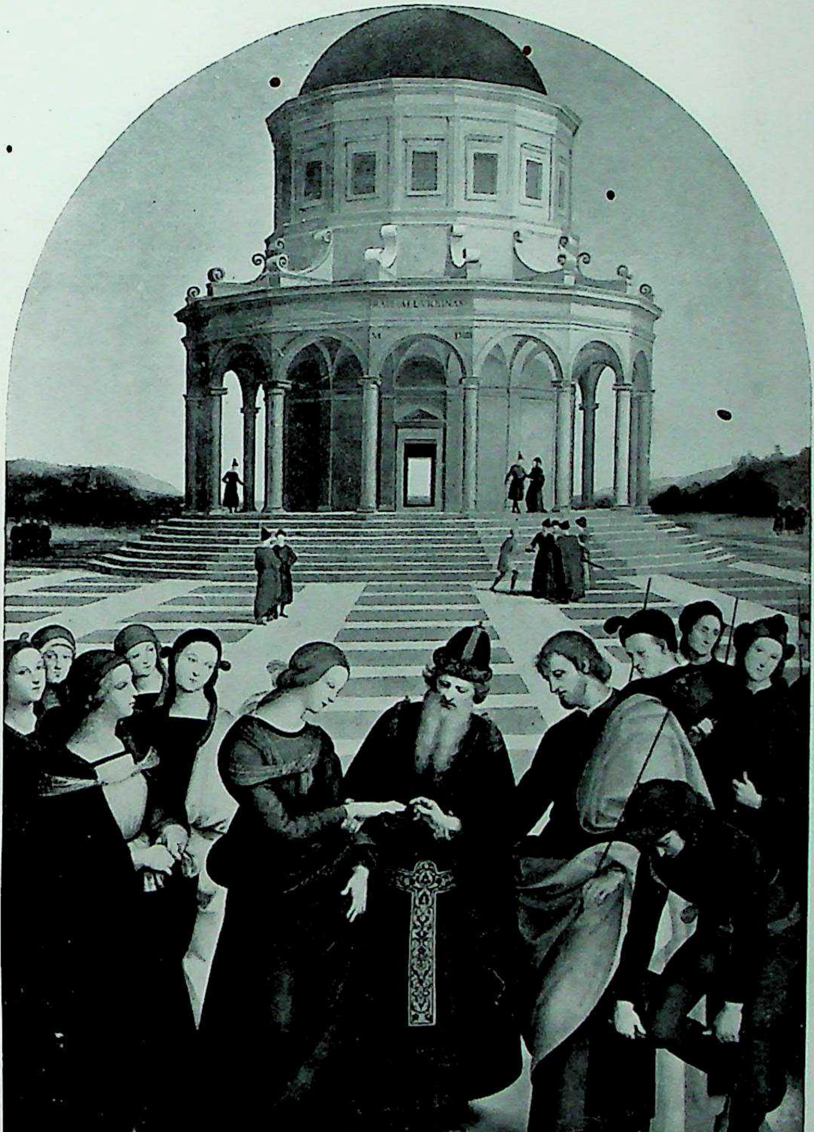
RAPHAEL

SPOSALIZIO

UMBRIAN SCHOOL, 1483–1520 Brera, Milan

IT was in 1504, the year of his coming of age and while still a pupil of Perugino at Citta di Castello, that Raphael produced, and with pardonable pride signed in capitals over the portico of the temple, this engaging picture. The old myth that in this composition he followed closely upon Perugino's version of the same subject at Caen has now been happily dispelled, the Caen version proving to be a later and weaker edition by Lo Spagna of Raphael's prototype. The subject chosen in both pictures is the same. The high priest joins the hands of Joseph and Mary while the ring is placed on her finger. The maidens of the temple face the rejected suitors for Mary's hand, who resignedly break their rods in token of defeat, Joseph's rod, according to the legend, having blossomed to testify to his being the chosen bridegroom. The temple filling the background is of exquisite architectural design in the style of Bramante. From the charmingly posed figures in the foreground, not unconscious of the part they play, the eye is uplifted easily, instinctively across the flagged piazza and the low steps at the temple's base to the delicately vaulted peristyle. The sense of space and well-being in pure air and under cloudless skies is supremely rendered, and the golden glow of morning envelops the whole.

[*See p.* 24.

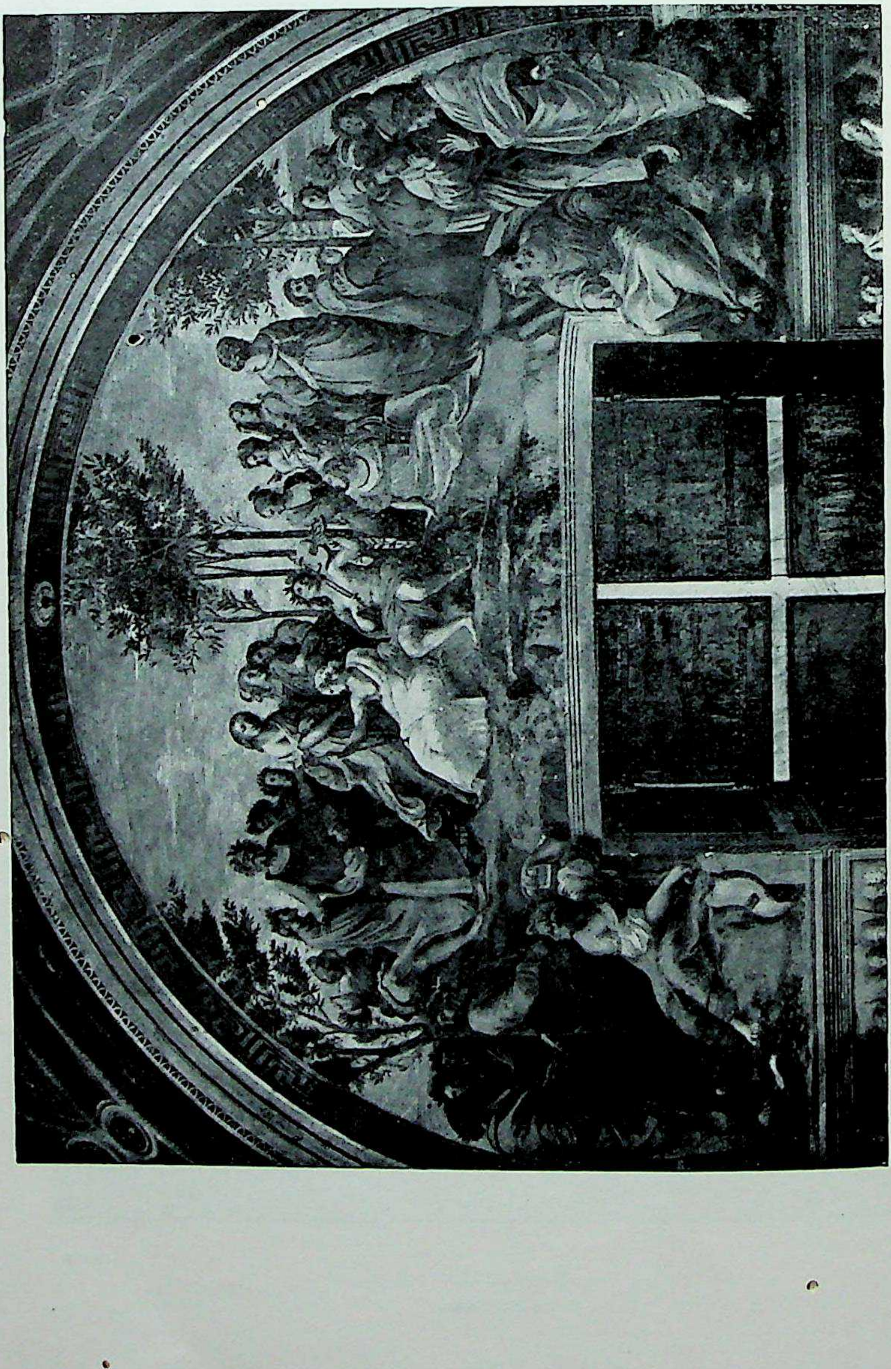


Brera

SPOSALIZIO

BY RAPHAEL

PLATE XXI



Vatican

PARNASSUS
BY RAPHAEL

PLATE 21

RAPHAEL

PARNASSUS

UMBRIAN SCHOOL, 1483–1520 Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican

AN acute critic has laid down that we only learn to appreciate Raphael fully after long study. The force of the remark may be felt when standing before the "Parnassus." The very perfection of the art becomes a stumbling-block. But consider the task Raphael has set himself—the representation of poetry. Here on the summit of the mountain Apollo and the Muses hold their court, gathering about them the great poetic spirits of the world. On the left, Homer declaims to a seated youth, with Dante and Virgil in communion behind him. Below, Petrarch and Sappho; on the right, aged Pindar holds forth to Horace. Apollo has discarded his lyre for a violin, which he wields perhaps not quite happily. An arch of ample proportions swings over all, Homer and a majestic Muse forming as it were supporting pillars. The window space that cuts into the fresco below serves to emphasize the crown of the hill. The gracious forms clustering round it soften the rigid architectural lines, the group on the left cunningly isolated, that on the right leading to the upper part of the composition. The variety of pose, gesture and expression is astounding. For all the crowd of personages, each holds his own in the field of vision, and, with the exception of the three central figures, there is an entire absence of staginess or over-elaboration. The colour is pleasant, bright and luminous without a single jarring note.

[*See p.* 24.

PLATE 22

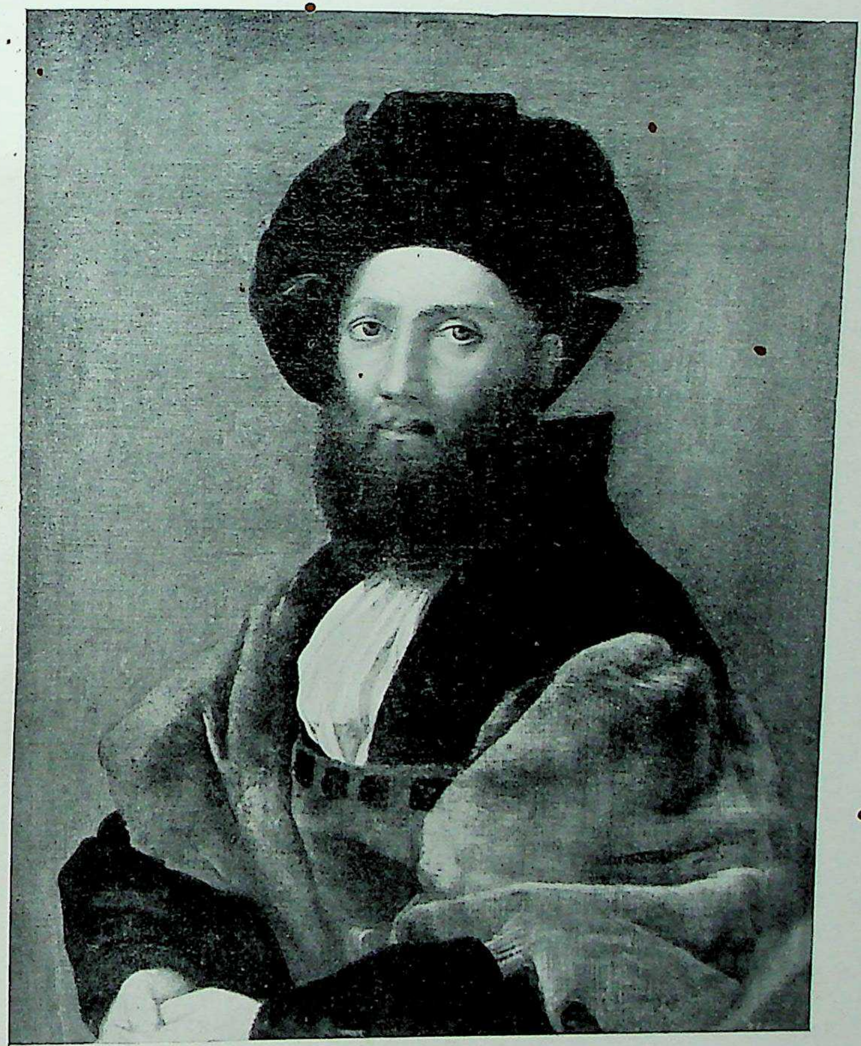
RAPHAEL

PORTRAIT OF BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE

UMBRIAN SCHOOL, 1483–1520 Louvre

THOUGH five years Raphael's senior, Count Baldassare Castiglione, poet, scholar, archæologist, connoisseur and courtier, was perhaps the first to discover the genius of the young painter, and became one of his most valued friends. An enthusiast for the antique, many of Raphael's happiest inspirations and excursions into classical subjects were directly due to his encouragement. Twice did the artist paint his portrait besides introducing it into his "School of Athens"; this version in 1515, the other four years later, a painting which may not have been completed and has certainly disappeared from view. As a piece of fine painting it has ever appealed with special force to artists. Some hundred years later a brother-painter, Rembrandt, selected this very head for the subject of one of his drawings now in the Albertina, and Rubens made a copy of it in bistre. Nor can we wonder at their choice, for the handling is superb, the expression full of dignity, serene with the quiet confidence of a well-stored mind sufficient unto itself. Passionless, unassuming, epicurean, Castiglione typified in no common degree the highest quality of his time, the supremacy of intellect.

But to the sensitive eye the colour harmonies of this exquisite "study in grey" will appeal above all else, with its delicate haunting shades of finely graded blacks and



Louvre

BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE

BY RAPHAEL

whites merging into silver, in which the clear blue eyes tell forcefully. The treatment is broad yet scrupulously fine.

To quote Castiglione in his Roman Elegy—

> "Assensu, nutuque mihi sæpe illa videtur,
> Dicere velle aliquid, et tua verba loqui.
> Agnoscit balboque patrem puer ore salutat,
> Hoc solor longos decipioque dies."

[*See p.* 24

PLATE 23

MICHELANGELO

CREATION OF ADAM

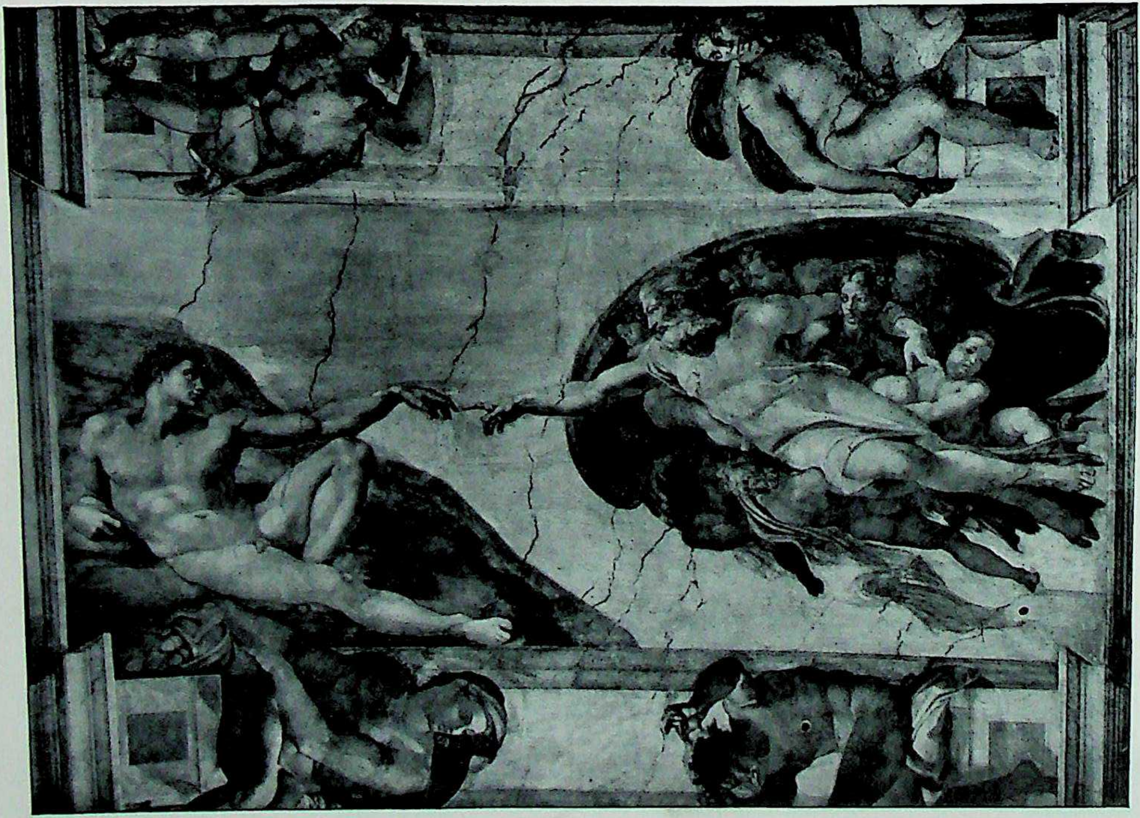
FLORENTINE SCHOOL, 1475–1564 Sixtine Chapel, Vatican

THIS scene, one of the central compartments in the great decorative scheme of the ceiling of the Sixtine Chapel, which had occupied him from 1508 to 1512, reveals Michelangelo at the highest point of his achievement.

Jehovah, a figure of superb vigour and strength, encircled by angels, sweeps forward to complete the great task of this the last day of Creation. The beautiful female figure gathered in His left arm probably represents not the uncreated Eve but the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs. On the bare newly-created earth, with its parallel mountain contours of incomparable grandeur and simplicity, Adam lies stretched. Perfect in beauty, the first man waits for the breath of life to animate his nerveless limbs. A world of wistful longing and dumb wonder speaks in his eyes. His right foot and arm are the embodiment of languid and inert repose. The left knee is bent as he half rises to respond to the magic touch. His attitude recalls that of the Theseus of the Parthenon.

Originally the colour scheme of the ceiling must have been light and delicate, and for all its darkening at the hands of time and incense-bearing priests, it is still soft and tender with glorious indigo-blue distances and flesh tints of warm grey, while the draperies vary from subdued red to golden yellow and pale green. The surface,

PLATE XXIII



Sixtine Chapel, Vatican

CREATION OF ADAM

BY MICHELANGELO

originally traced by the artist from the cartoon with the stylus, is now somewhat cracked, and from the appearance of the plaster it has been estimated that the figure of Adam, which if erect would measure ten feet in height, was completed in about three days.

[*See p.* 25.

PLATE 24

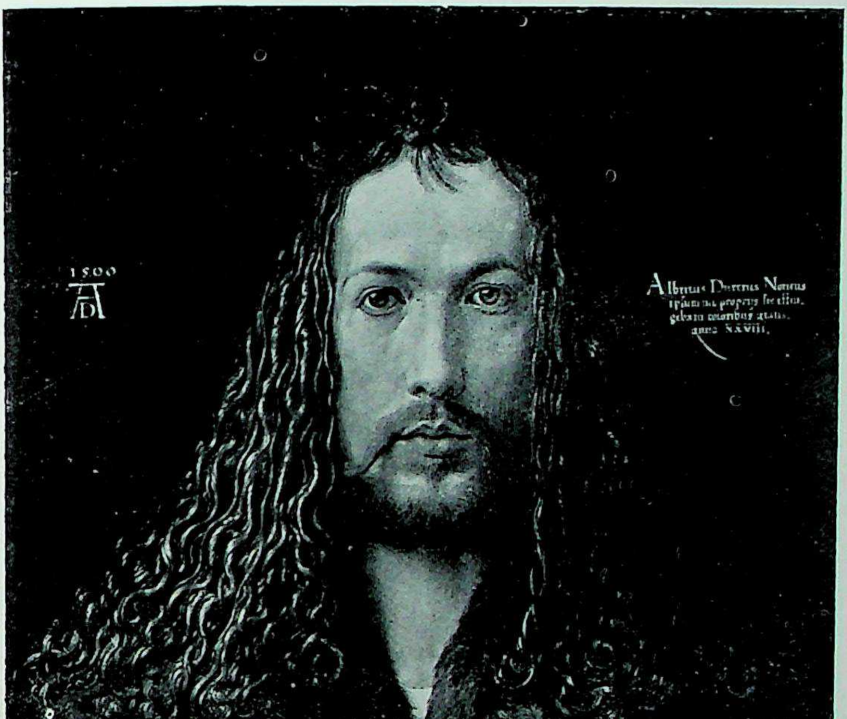
ALBRECHT DÜRER

PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF

GERMAN SCHOOL, 1471–1528 Pinakothek, Munich

THIS autobiographical portrait of the great Nuremberg master might well, from its elaborately careful treatment and almost monumental mien, have served him for a diploma picture, a kind of epitome of all that he had so far achieved. According to the inscription, it was painted in 1500, when Dürer was only twenty-eight years of age. Traces of an earlier cartouche under the thick varnish are, however, evidence that the present inscription is a later addition, and it has been suggested that the portrait was really painted after 1506, on Dürer's return from his visit to Italy. This would also accord better with the appearance of the head, which gives the impression of an older man, while the fact that the portrait is taken in the very unusual full-face position also indicates Southern influence. On the other hand, recent criticism has pointed out the broken folds of the cloak and the stiffly disposed fingers as distinctly non-Italian.

But for the fact that the picture represents the artist himself, we might well have taken it for a head of Christ, its grave hieratic immobility, its fixed gaze, the flowing hair, and the type of countenance all uniting to support such an idea. Indeed it is rather as an ideal presentment than as a strict likeness that it was painted. The hair falling on each side of the face is treated in a curiously


1500
AD
Albertus Durerus Noricus ipsum me propriis sic effingebam coloribus aetatis anno XXVIII.

Munich

PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF
BY DÜRER

conventional, almost decorative manner, the curls being picked out with gold, whereas the beard and fur are treated naturally with a firmness and delicacy which even Jan van Eyck could not have surpassed. The flesh tints have become rather dull and hot, owing to injudicious varnishing, but the eyes are wonderfully brilliant, although one has been slightly injured by a scratch on the panel.

[*See p.* 26.

PLATE 25

ALBRECHT DÜRER

PORTRAIT OF HIERONYMUS HOLTZSCHUER

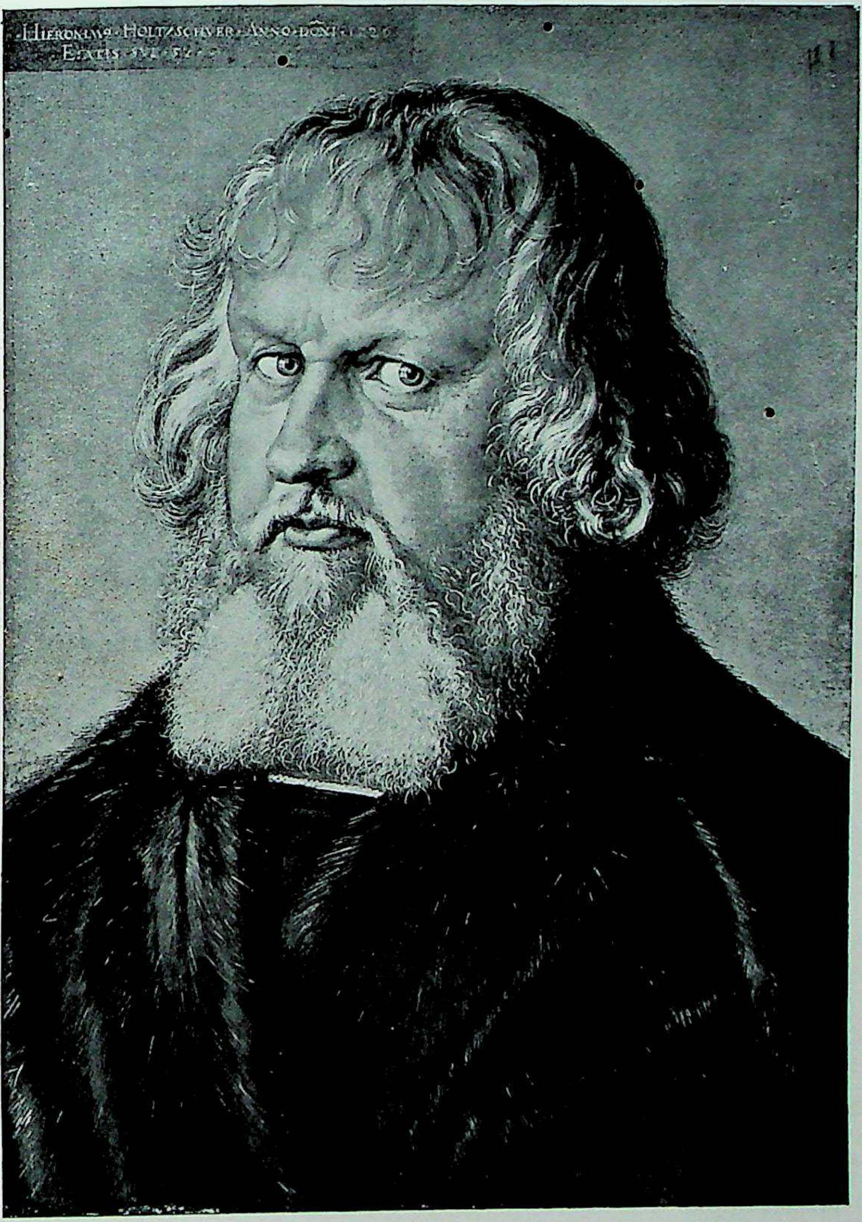
GERMAN SCHOOL, 1471–1528 Berlin Museum

THIS portrait was painted in 1526, soon after Dürer's return from his famous journey to the Netherlands, where he had met the veteran Quentin Matsys and had been fêted by van Orley at Brussels. Perhaps contact with other artists awoke in Dürer a sense of the peculiarities and the closeness of his own style, for this portrait of one of the chief patricians and rulers of Nuremberg shows a bolder generalization and greater freedom than the painter had displayed before. For all that every hair is painted, as in his own portrait, nothing is lost of breadth of general effect. Holtzschuer, one of the pillars of the Reformation, lives here again before us. A grave kindliness and quiet decision are stamped on his features. His fifty-seven years weigh lightly upon him, his silvery hair and beard seeming to belie the vigour of his expression and the fire in his eyes. Like Leonardo, Dürer was almost as much interested in science as in art, and the perspective of the eye especially fascinated him. In this portrait, as in the earlier one of Wolgemut, he has not been able to refrain from noting, as in a diagram, the reflection of a window and its bars in the iris of each eye.

This portrait remained in the Holtzschuer family until as late as 1884, when it passed into the Berlin Museum.

[*See p.* 26.

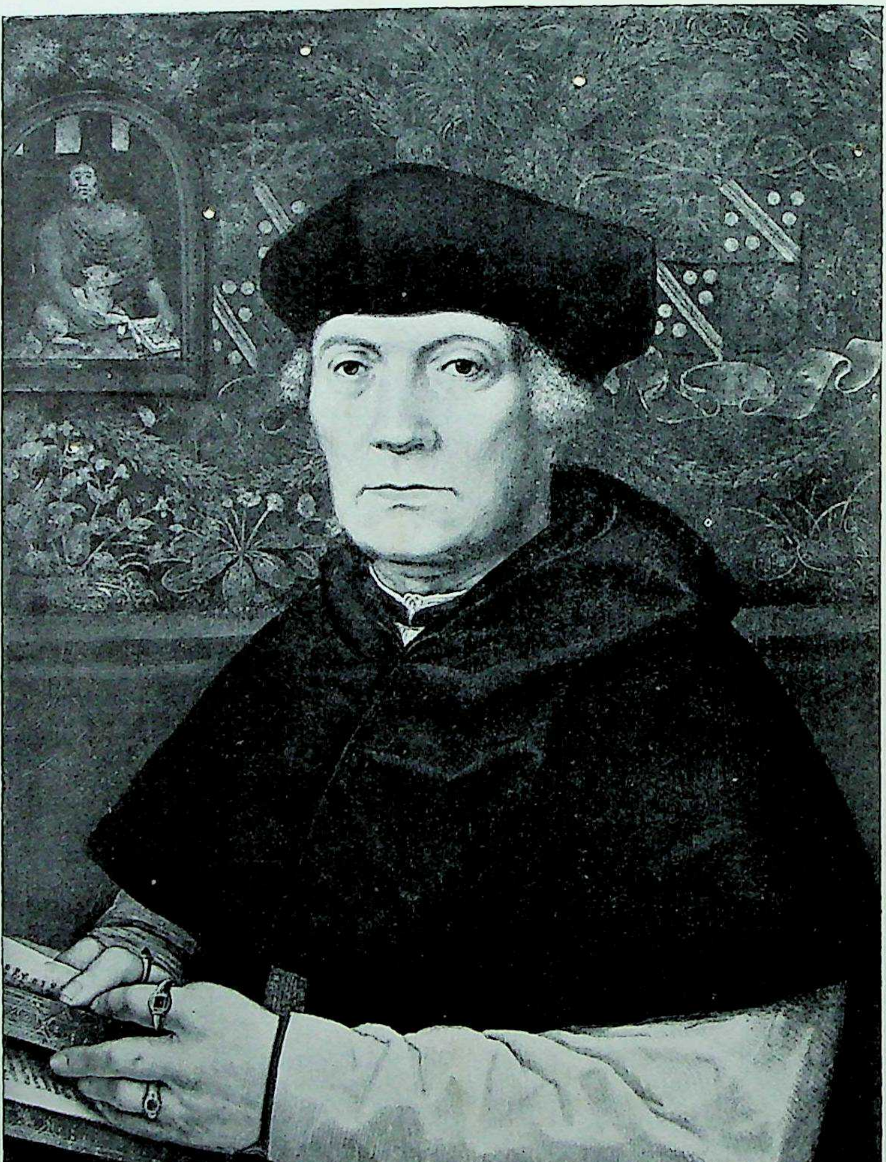
PLATE XXV


HIERONIMVS · HOLTZSCHVER · ANNO · DÕNI · 1526
ETATIS · SVE · 57

Berlin

PORTRAIT OF HIERONYMUS HOLTZSCHUER

BY DÜRER



Munich

PORTRAIT OF JEHAN CARONDELET

BY BARENT VAN ORLEY

PLATE 26

BARENT VAN ORLEY

PORTRAIT OF JEHAN CARONDELET

FLEMISH SCHOOL — Pinakothek, Munich
Circa 1491–1542

THIS fine portrait, once ascribed to Holbein and, until recently, to Quentin Matsys, has now been recognized as a work from the hand of Barent van Orley, painter to the Court of Brussels. A portrait of this same Chancellor Carondelet, from the hand of Mabuse, is in the Louvre.

Here van Orley has indulged in a decorative environment, though he has stopped short of the elaboration shown in Holbein's portrait of Georg Gisze. The severe outline of Carondelet's cap and cape is set off by a background of somewhat unusual type, a fine ornamental pattern of flowers and foliage, among which are introduced in frequent repetition a coat of arms and an inscribed scroll, standing out in blue and green against a dark ground, an arrangement that would have appealed to William Morris. In a framed picture on the wall figures the Chancellor's Patron, St. John the Baptist, with his lamb and a book. The flesh tints are of a warm red, as with Jan van Eyck and Antonello da Messina, and the whole picture is strong and deep in colour.

[*See p.* 27.

PLATE 27

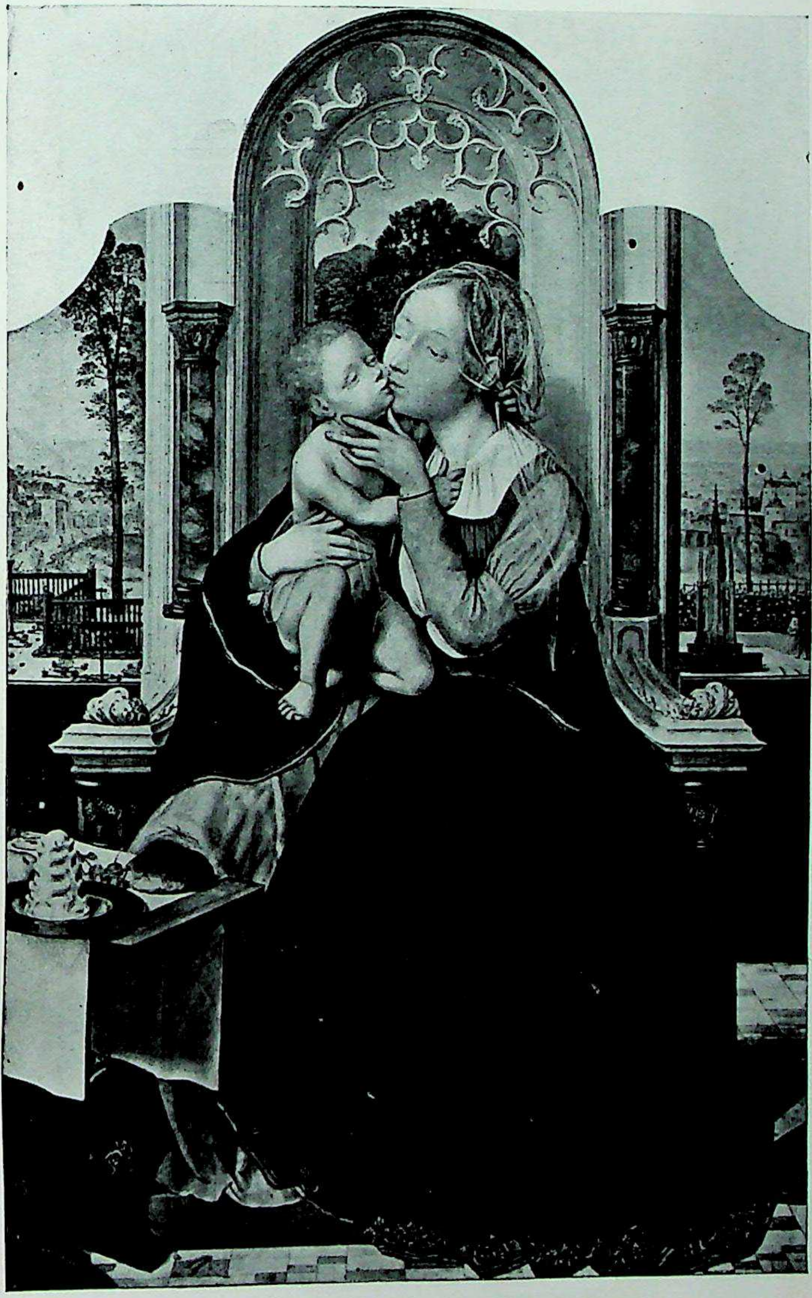
QUENTIN MATSYS

MADONNA AND CHILD

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1466–1530 Berlin Museum

THIS delicious, unconventional presentment of the most familiar subject in mediæval painting is instinct with tender human sentiment and fresh beauty. The gentle mother, fondly kissing her curly-headed boy, wears the Madonna's mantle of regal red over her blue dress with its sleeves of pinkish grey and snow-white chemisette. Her veil is of gauze, delicately embroidered. The elaborate Renaissance throne, set like a kind of summer-house in the midst of a formal garden, seems almost out of keeping with the simple little repast laid out so temptingly on a table—the loaf of bread, the cherries and one of those famous *Baumkuchen* which are made to this day at Christmastide in Northern Germany. Far away, beyond the fenced-in garden with its stately fountain and rose-hedge and its neat parterres, beyond the town with its many towers, too, rise the blue hills without which no Flemish painter of this period would deem his background completely furnished.

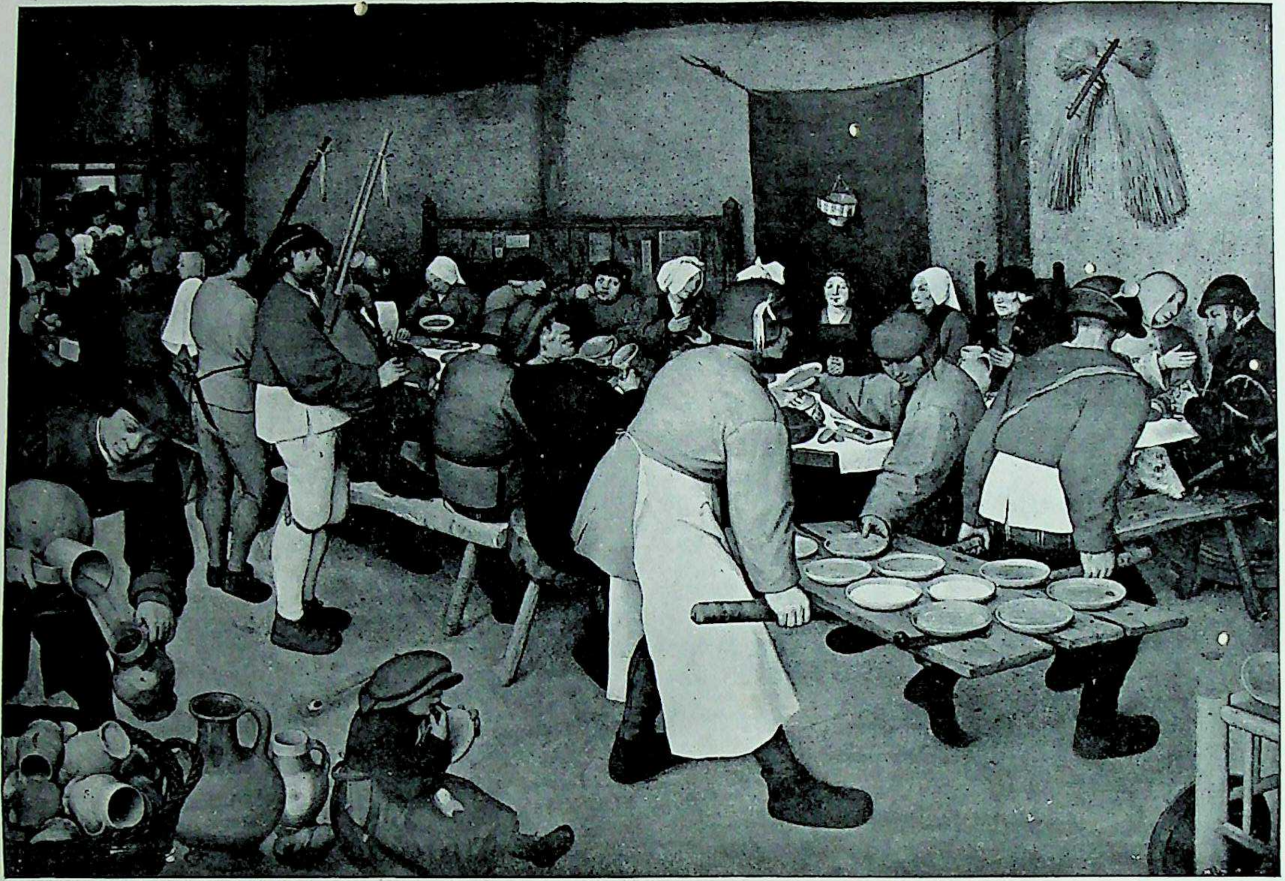
[*See p.* 27.



Berlin

MADONNA AND CHILD

BY QUENTIN MATSYS



Vienna

PEASANT WEDDING

BY PIETER BRUEGHEL THE ELDER

PLATE 28

PIETER BRUEGHEL THE ELDER

PEASANT WEDDING

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1525-1569 Imperial Gallery, Vienna

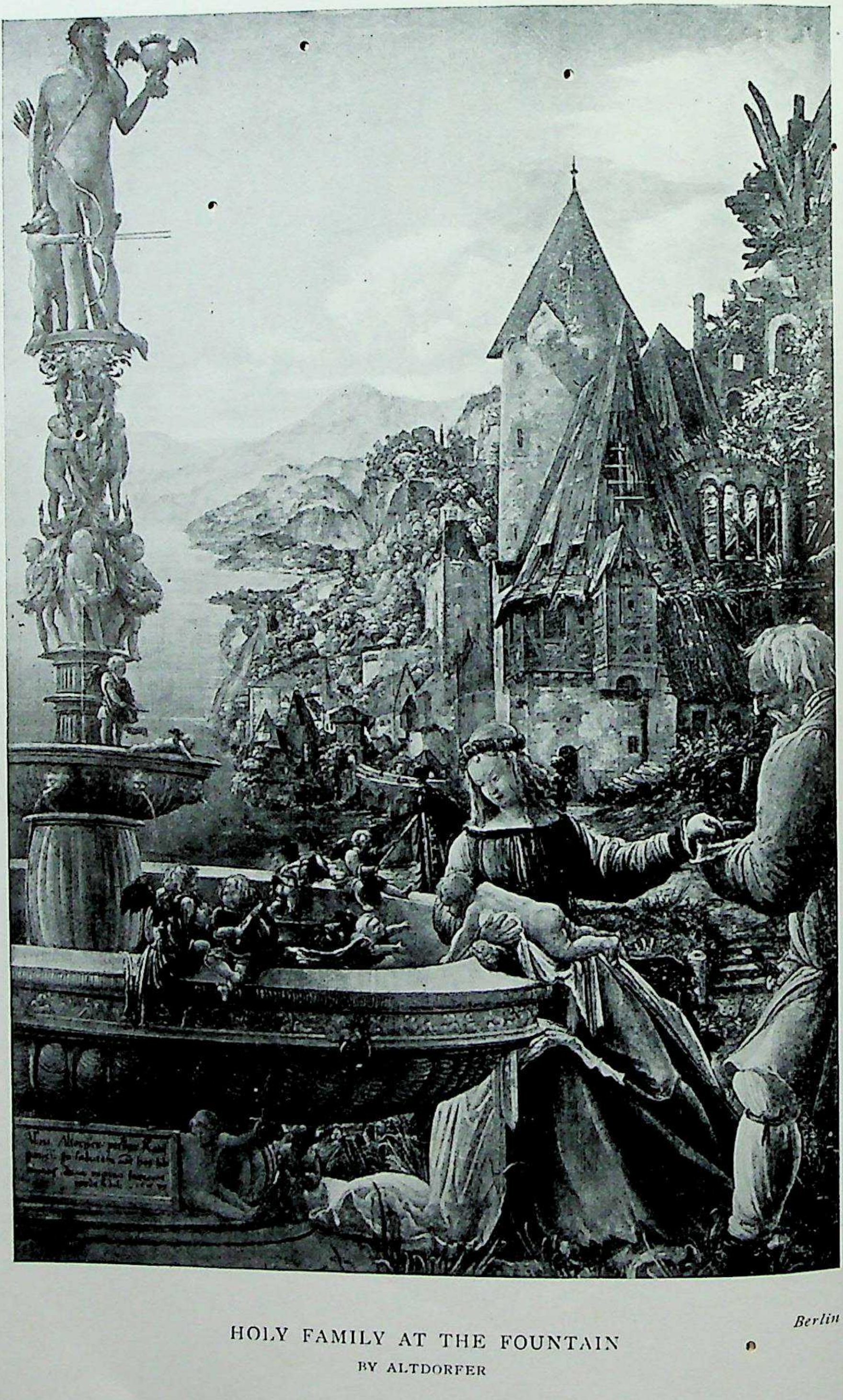
WITH this picture before us it is not surprising to hear that Pieter Brueghel was wont to frequent village festivities, himself disguised as a peasant, in the company of some trusty friend. How heartily he threw himself into the fun and humour of such rustic entertainments is shown in many of his drawings and in this spirited rendering of the details and incidents of a peasant wedding-feast, which was painted at the time of his full maturity, shortly before his death. In such late works, his figures display a largeness of design, his conception a dramatic *bonhomie*, and his tonality is more sonorous than in his earlier paintings. Never has he attained a more splendid effect of life and movement. The piece, too, is as gay in colour as in expression, the yellow gold of the wall behind the figures enhancing the warm tones of the dresses, while the pale blue coat of the cook carrying the cheeses stands out in cheerful contrast. Among the guests at the board a friar in earnest conversation may be noticed on the right.

The picture is sufficient evidence that Pieter Brueghel, at a time when the painters of Flanders were turning to Italy for their inspiration, remained sturdily Flemish. He has not attempted to compose this feast on the lines of Leonardo's "Last Supper," nor has he converted the clumsy, bucolic peasant types into the classically correct forms of late Italian art. The composition is quite informal, following the diagonal line on which he so often built up his designs.

Brueghel's paintings are of great variety, and it is only in the gallery at Vienna that he can be really appreciated. But he was the greatest of the Flemish masters between the van Eycks and Rubens. Rubens, indeed, admired him so much that he made himself the possessor of a number of his works.

[*See p.* 27.

PLATE XXIX



Berlin

HOLY FAMILY AT THE FOUNTAIN

BY ALTDORFER

PLATE 29

ALBRECHT ALTDORFER

HOLY FAMILY AT THE FOUNTAIN

GERMAN SCHOOL, *circa* 1475-1538 Berlin Museum

CURIOUSLY quaint and typically German in its *naïveté* is the setting Altdorfer has chosen for his picture. The homely group of the Holy Family is but an incident in a composition into which "the little Albrecht," as the French have dubbed him to distinguish him from his greater namesake, has crowded all the children of his fantasy. It is a winsome, whimsical conception full of delicate poetic feeling. In the elaborate Renaissance fountain, Altdorfer, who as town-architect of Regensburg was no doubt limited to more sober and practical creations, allowed his imaginative inventiveness to run riot, though he has not been quite able to cope with the perspective of the great deep basin. A band of busy, gesticulating imps, masquerading as angels, have made this their sporting-ground, and romp in the water or squat on the margin. Even the Christ-child dabbles His hands in the cool, refreshing water, and the Madonna, resting on her weary flight, is too much absorbed in Him to show any interest in the cherries offered by her venerable spouse.

Altdorfer's delight in landscape has gained for him the rather misleading title of the father of landscape art. He has introduced here the rocky shore of some great river or inland sea, and though he knows enough of aerial perspective to paint his distant mountains a deep blue, the transition from the yellow and brown tones of the middle distance is abrupt and arbitrary. For all that, how charming is this open-air scene, a fairy-tale in a fairy setting, worthy of Hans Andersen himself!

[*See p.* 27.

PLATE 30

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

THE MEYER MADONNA

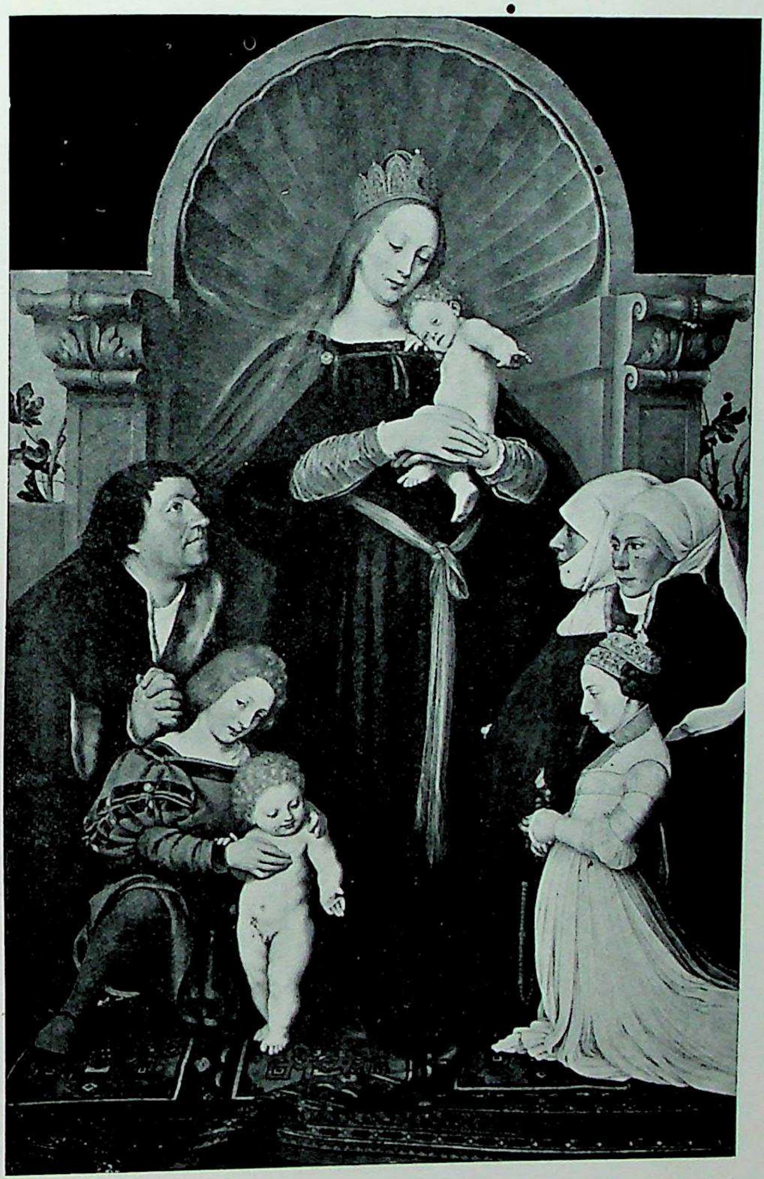
GERMAN SCHOOL, 1497–1543 Grand-ducal Palace, Darmstadt

THE grandest achievement of Holbein's early years, dating from 1526, before his first visit to England, and exhibiting his powers in the realms both of portraiture and religious painting, is the great Madonna executed for the Burgomaster of Basle, whose portrait, with that of his wife Dorothy, had been among the artist's first successes.

The calm, stately Madonna carrying her Child on her arm appears here as friend and protectress of Jacob Meyer, a staunch upholder of the Catholic faith, and his family, who kneel before her on a richly coloured carpet, sheltering beneath her flowing grey mantle. The Burgomaster's plain features are illumined with reverent devotion as he gazes upwards in enthusiastic worship. His son in front of him is holding a baby with curly hair, nude like the Christ-child. Facing the head of the family kneel his wives, dressed in black and white; the first, dead many years, is nearest the Virgin; the second, kindly and shrewd, has her daughter Anna at her side. The figures are about three-quarters the size of life. The sentiment of the picture is calm, reverent and devotional. Pathetic, too, are the face and gesture of the infant Christ, His eyes reddened with weeping, His head resting wearily upon His mother's neck.

The picture, which is in wonderful condition, is a marvel of rich deep colour, the flesh tints being particularly beautiful and varied. The fine copy in the Dresden Gallery was probaby painted about a century later for a descendant of Jacob Meyer, and shows several variations.

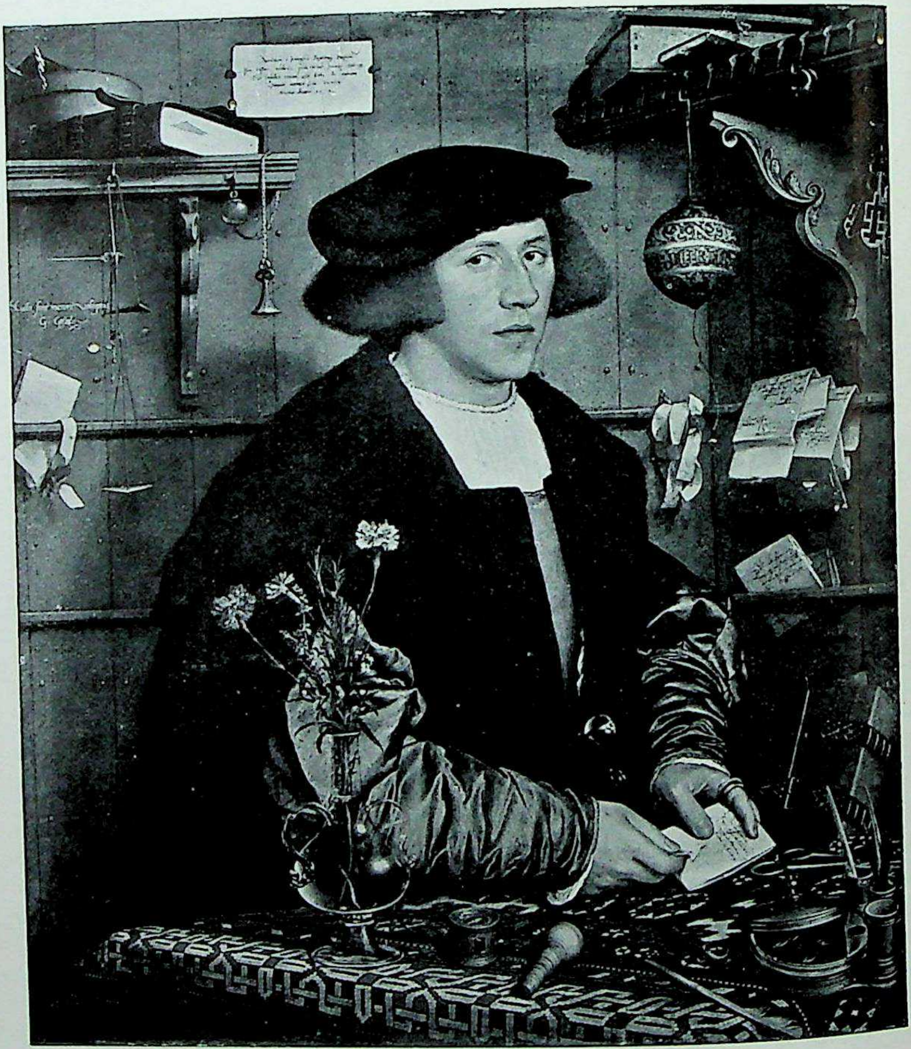
[*See p.* 28.



Grand-ducal Palace, Darmstadt

THE MEYER MADONNA

BY HOLBEIN



Berlin

PORTRAIT OF GEORG GISZE

BY HOLBEIN

PLATE 31

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

PORTRAIT OF THE MERCHANT GEORG GISZE

GERMAN SCHOOL, 1497–1543 Berlin Museum

DURING Holbein's first visit to England he was employed by the cultured circle which gathered round Sir Thomas More. But on his return to England, after the fall of the Chancellor, he was obliged for a time, before again winning Court favour, to fall back upon his natural patrons, the German merchants, who, then as now, formed quite a colony in London, their headquarters, the Steelyard, occupying the present site of Cannon Street Station.

The finest of these Steelyard portraits is that of Georg Gisze, painted in 1532, a year before "The Ambassadors." The young merchant is represented sitting in his counting-house at a table spread with a richly coloured eastern cloth, and surrounded by all the accessories of his daily occupation—the papers, the writing materials, the books and ledgers, the string in a blue and gilt ball hanging from a shelf and, what we might go far to find in any modern business office, an exquisite Venetian glass vase containing some red carnations. All these details, on which the light falls from the front, are rendered with a marvellous precision and delicacy. Yet in no wise do they detract from the face, which seems to look out at us as though its owner had glanced up from the letter he is about to open at a caller intent on business. The colouring is not only beautiful, but quite original. Against the warm green background of the woodwork the blacks and rose-red of the dress and the deep lines of the table-cloth show most effectively.

[*See p.* 28.

PLATE 32

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

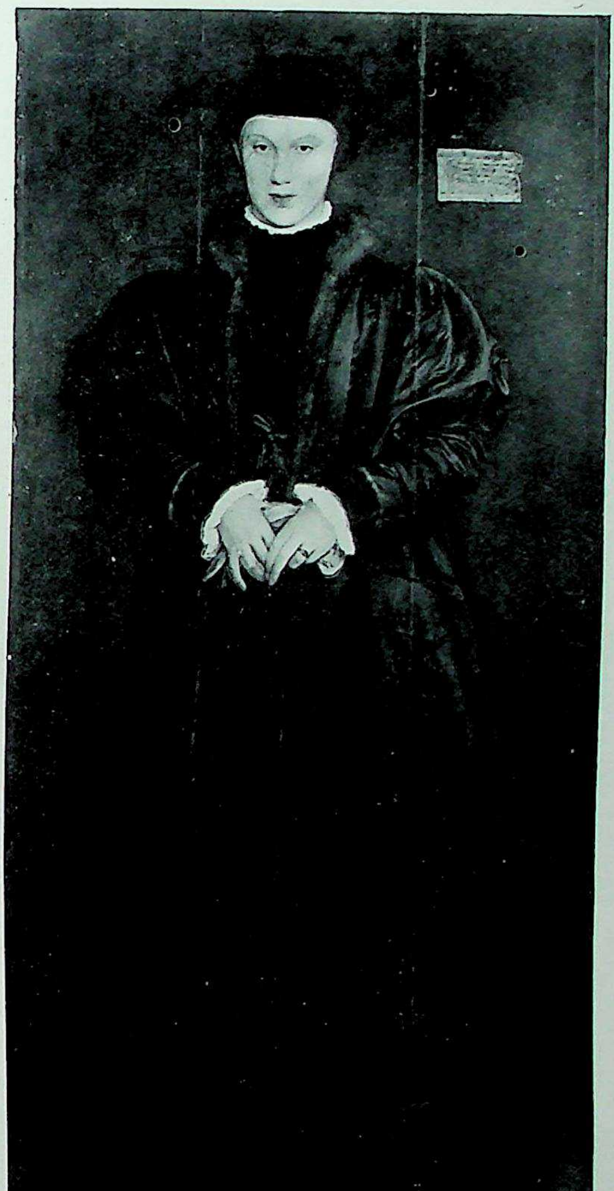
PORTRAIT OF CHRISTINA SFORZA, DUCHESS OF MILAN

GERMAN SCHOOL, 1497–1543 National Gallery

AFTER Holbein's introduction to the court of Henry VIII he was commissioned more than once to delineate the features of the ladies whom the royal Bluebeard proposed to honour with his hand. His first mission was to Brussels in 1538, to the young widow of the Duke of Milan, a Danish princess, scarcely as yet in her seventeenth year. In this fascinating full-length portrait, painted from the sketch made at the time, Holbein shows himself at his best and in his most sympathetic mood. For once he seems to have relaxed something of the cool, detached gaze of the acute but disinterested observer, and to have allowed himself to be affected by the almost pathetic charm of this naïve girlish figure who appears before us just as she stood to him during the three short hours he is said to have been in her presence, rather shy and reserved, her delicate, restless hands betraying something of the nervous tension of the situation. A smaller version of this subject showing only the head and hands is at Windsor.

Nothing could be simpler than this severe mourning habit, the long black fur-lined coat, only relieved by white ruffles at throat and wrists, which conceals and amplifies the tall, slender figure set against a blue background. Infinitely engaging is this pale face with its

PLATE XXXII



National Gallery

PORTRAIT OF CHRISTINA SFORZA, DUCHESS OF MILAN

BY HOLBEIN

sweet, ruddy mouth and quiet eyes. According to her traditional reply to the king's proposal, the lady showed herself not devoid of humour. "Had she two heads," she is reported to have said, "one of them should be at His Majesty's service." The picture was purchased in 1909 for £72,000, and presented by the National Art-Collections Fund to the nation.

[*See p.* 29.

PLATE 33

ANDREA MANTEGNA

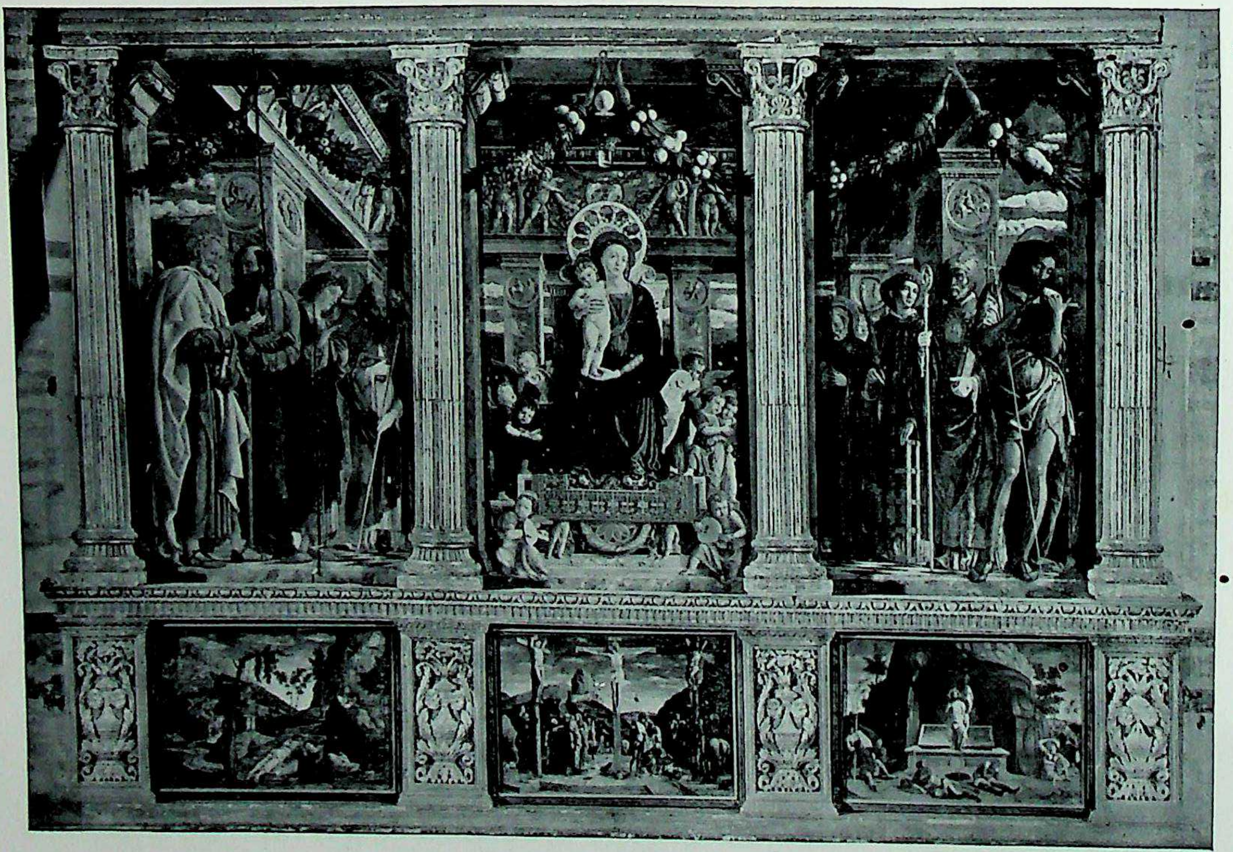
ALTAR-PIECE

SCHOOL OF PADUA, 1431–1506 S. Zeno, Verona

THIS grand picture, in the fine old frame of blue and gold originally designed for it, is an excellent example of the unity of a Renaissance altar-piece, where the frame harmonizes with and completes the architectural setting of the compartments into which the picture is divided.

Mantegna finished this work for the Protonotary of Verona in 1459, the same year that he completed the Eremitani frescoes in Padua, and this before he was thirty. The influence of his studies from antique sculpture and bas-reliefs is evident in all his work. In their plastic modelling his figures have far more in common with the gods and heroes of Rome than with the saints and martyrs of Christianity. Two aisles of these statuesque saints flank and lead up to the Madonna, enthroned amidst a joyous chorus of music-making boy-angels, who differ but slightly from the *putti* in the sculptured frieze around her chapel. The garlands of carved fruits, a familiar feature in Paduan pictures, are of course also borrowed from classical models. Through the open arcade may be seen a dark blue sky, flecked with Mantegna's peculiar woolly clouds. The high point of sight gives the spectator the impression of looking up from below at a kind of platform on which the tableau

PLATE XXXIII



S. Zeno, Verona

ALTAR-PIECE
BY MANTEGNA

is arranged. The front figures, the gaunt St. John the Baptist on the right and St. Peter on the left, appear almost as though coming out of the picture, an effect heightened by St. Peter's violent-hued draperies. Mantegna had but little feeling for colour as a sensuous element. He uses bright colours, but spots them about promiscuously. Purity of form, severe intellectual abstraction, and often a dramatic intensity are the qualities we find in this truly great artist.

[*See p.* 29.

PLATE 34

GIOVANNI BELLINI

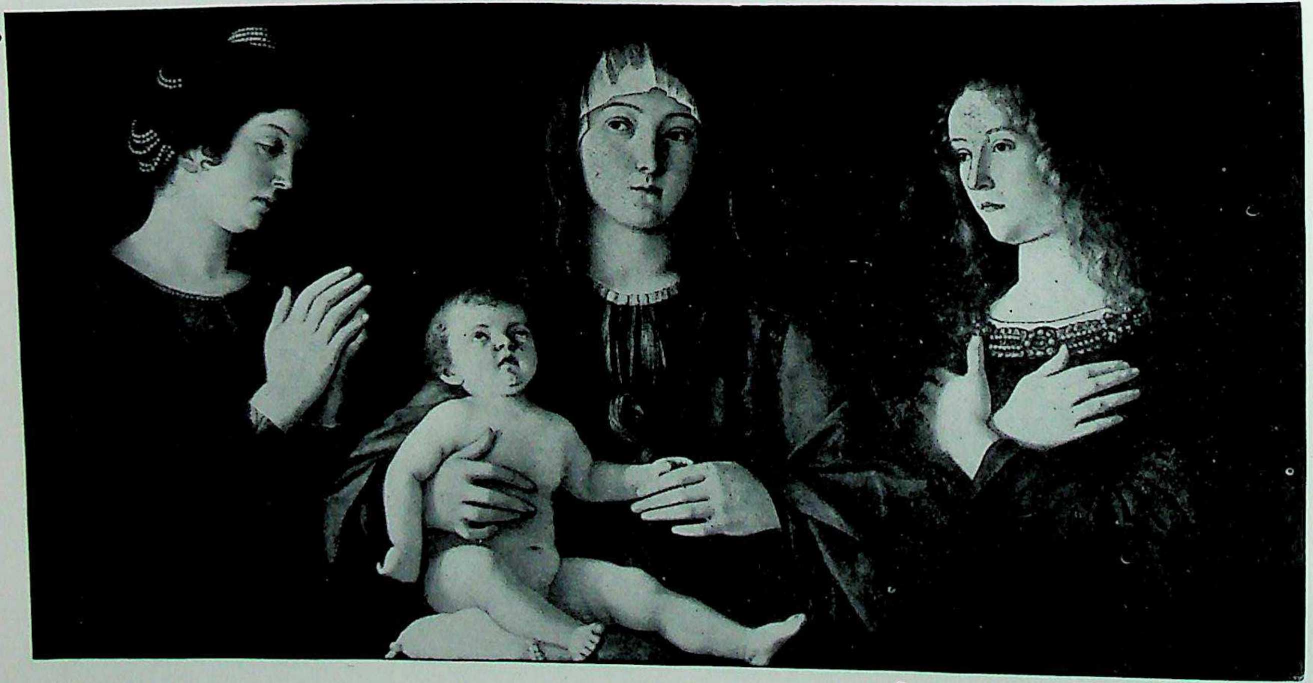
MADONNA AND SAINTS

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1428–1516 Academy, Venice

OF that great school of Venice, which has inspired painters of every age and every country, Giovanni Bellini was the real founder. What the Florentines endeavoured to express in terms of pure form, what appeared to Leonardo veiled in mysterious light and shadow, was to the Venetian primarily a matter of colour, not of isolated local tints, but of colour bathed and harmonized in golden atmosphere.

The long series of Madonnas with which Bellini's name is chiefly connected includes not only the stately altar-piece but the smaller and more intimate picture for home enjoyment. To this class belongs the "Madonna with St. Catherine and the Magdalen," of which there is a replica in Madrid, painted about the time when he was engaged upon the great Frari altar-piece which he completed in 1488. This Virgin, with rounded oval face and small mouth, is the same type as the Frari Madonna. Her head is finely set on the full firm column of her neck. St. Catherine on the left, with elaborately tired hair, gazes at the Child with quiet fervour. Very sweet is the Magdalen with her long flowing tresses and hands folded on her breast. The colour is rich and subdued, merged in a golden-brown haze, and the illumination suggests an artificial rather than a daylight effect. The feeling of the picture is one of restful well-being and grace, with no hint of dramatic or symbolic intention. Bellini, though essentially a religious painter, shows neither the devotion of a Fra Angelico nor the rapt pietism of Perugino, but all his pictures breathe a tranquil peace and sweetness.

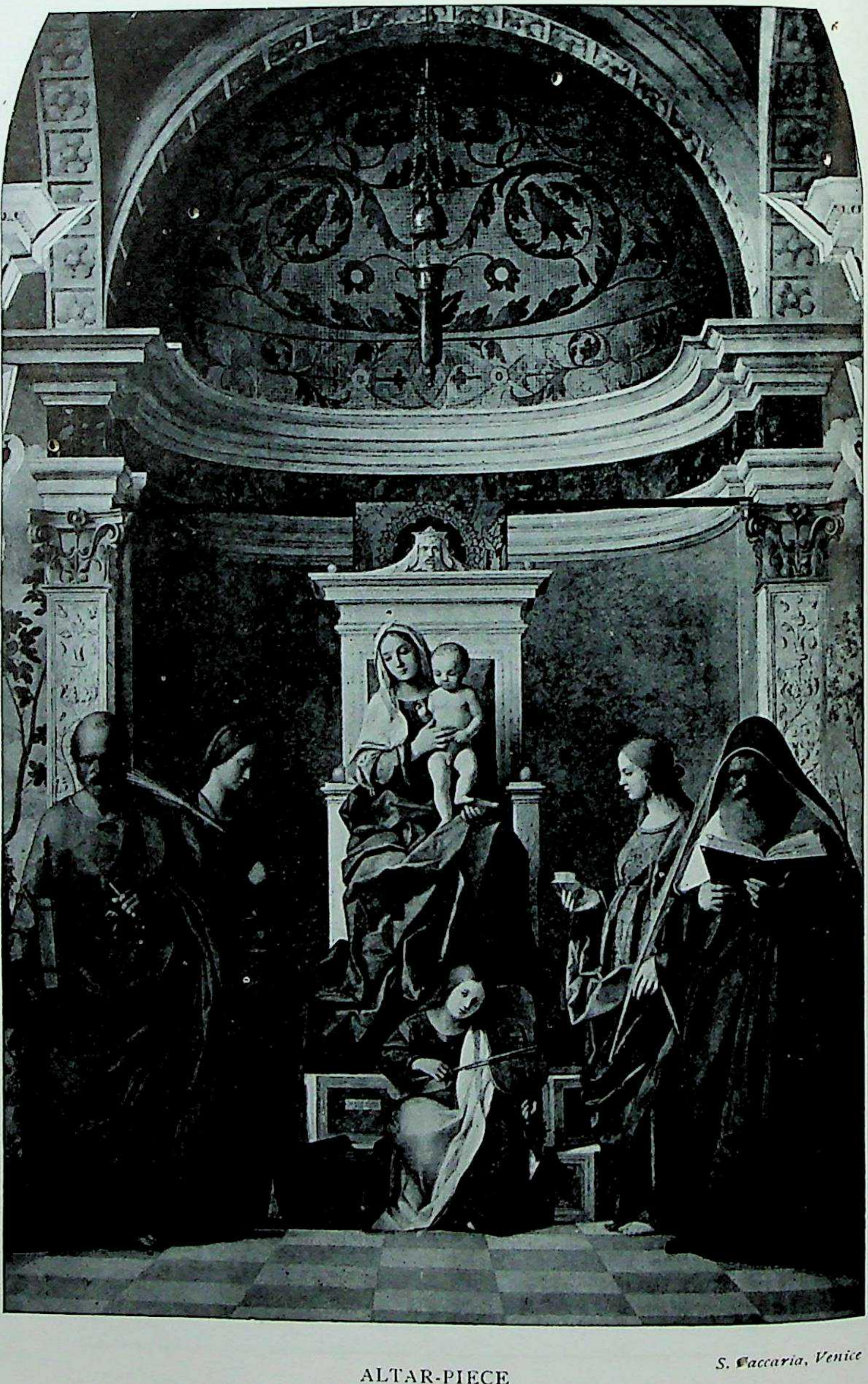
[*See p.* 30.



Academy, Venice

MADONNA AND SAINTS

BY GIOVANNI BELLINI



S. Zaccaria, Venice

ALTAR-PIECE

BY GIOVANNI BELLINI

PLATE 35

GIOVANNI BELLINI

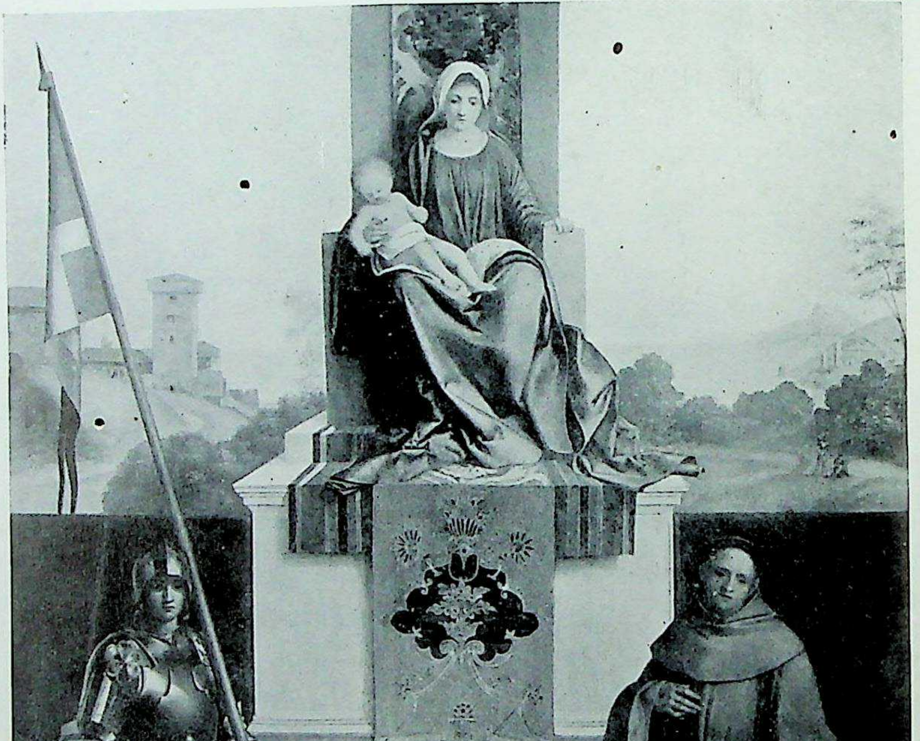
ALTAR-PIECE

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1428–1516 S. Zaccaria, Venice

IT was in 1505, as an old man not far off eighty, that Bellini painted his great altar-piece for the church of S. Zaccaria, a picture which reveals a new largeness and spaciousness and a perfect balance in the arrangement of the figures placed at each side of the throne under a finely decorated Renaissance canopy. Each Saint stands in a thoughtful aloofness, intent on his own dreamy musing. Very lovely is St. Lucy on the right, her delicate profile of a flowerlike sweetness, her light figure contrasting well with the strong, richly glowing draperies and ample forms of St. Peter and St. Jerome. St. Catherine, a more matronly figure, faces her on the other side. The delightful boy-angel in dark green and yellow robes discoursing music on the steps of the throne is a *motif* frequent in Venetian pictures of this period. Sometimes a band or trio of these, as in Mantegna's S. Zeno altar-piece and Carpaccio's "Presentation" in the Academy at Venice, enliven with their strains the meditations of the sacred company. The arrangement of the Child standing with His feet on His mother's hand occurs also in Mantegna's altar-piece. The picture is signed and dated on the foot of the throne.

As a colourist Bellini attains perhaps here his zenith. The deep tones are bathed and saturated in an atmosphere of luminous gold. All is perfectly blended and, from the absence of brush-marks, the colours would almost seem to have flowed on to the panel. Yet with the freedom and mastery and the sensuous enjoyment of colour which belonged to the art of the new century, Bellini still continued to express something of the old religious sentiment which was so rapidly giving place to fresh ideals and more mundane aspirations.

[*See p.* 31.



S. Liberale, Castelfranco

ALTAR-PIECE

BY GIORGIONE

PLATES

PLATE 36

GIORGIONE

ALTAR-PIECE

VENETIAN SCHOOL
Circa 1477–1511

S. Liberale, Castelfranco

IN the gaunt, bare cathedral at Castelfranco hangs this famous altar-piece, the one perfectly authenticated, although cruelly restored, picture by Giorgione, painted about 1504, just a little earlier than Bellini's S. Zaccaria Madonna. Though in arrangement it follows the formal grouping of an earlier art, Giorgione has breathed into it something of the magical glamour and romance which became the key-note of his and later Venetian painting.

Aloft and aloof upon her simple throne sits the Madonna. The dark green of her dress, in bold contrast to her rich mantle, is repeated again in a shade of exquisite delicacy in the pale green tapestry, patterned with blue and gold, which falls from her feet. The throne, painted in a series of quiet harmonious greys, shows silvery against the deep crimson velvet of the wall, darker against the transparent melting sky above. Below, to right and left, each wrapped in the solitude of his own thoughts, stand St. Francis and S. Liberale. The pose of St. Francis is copied from the figure of the Saint in Bellini's S. Giobbe altar-piece. In the features of S. Liberale, the patron saint of the district, Giorgione seems to have portrayed those of the young Matteo Costanzo, in whose memory the Costanzi were offering the altar-piece to the cathedral of their native

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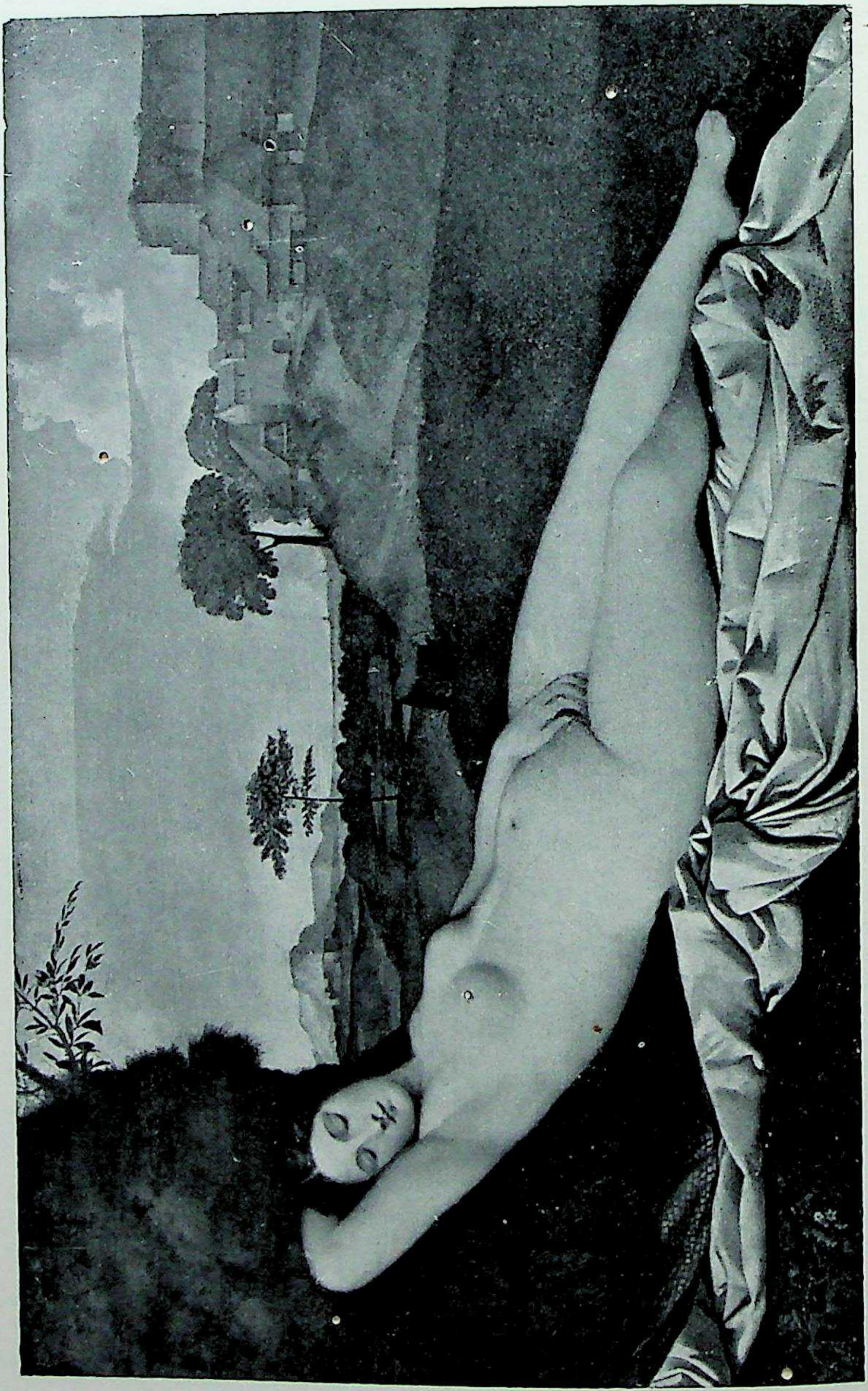
town. He is attired from head to foot in gleaming armour, like the little study in the National Gallery which some would have to be a copy from this figure. And beyond, a soft landscape broken by castellated towers stretches away to the sea, over which broods the mysterious light of early morning. A wonderful serenity, dignity and silence breathe from the picture, seeming to awake an answering note in the spectator as he gazes.

[*See p.* 31.

PLATE XXXVII



Dresden

VENUS
BY GIORGIONE

PLATE 37

GIORGIONE

VENUS

Venetian School
Circa 1477–1511

Dresden

This great prototype of all the Venetian Venus-pictures, mentioned by the Morelli of the sixteenth and rediscovered by his namesake of the nineteenth century, passed many years dirty and neglected in the Dresden Gallery, posing as a copy by Sassoferrato after Titian. That this is indeed the Venus mentioned by the Anonimo as having a Cupid and its landscape finished by Titian is now confirmed beyond doubt. The landscape is almost identical with that of Titian's "Noli me tangere" in the National Gallery, painted about the same time. The Cupid, being hopelessly injured, was cleaned off in the last century. But in Van Dyck's sketch-book we find two drawings apparently of this picture, one with a Cupid sitting below the uplifted right arm while two others recline at the feet; and a second with the goddess's right foot showing. It is, indeed, obvious that, were the right leg continued to its natural length, the foot would just show, but Giorgione preferred to sacrifice some slight literal accuracy to the rhythmical sweep of his line. In the same way her left foot, half suspended in the air, could not possibly maintain its rigidity in the relaxation of sleep. This rhythm prevails throughout the composition, where the undulating curves of the landscape and the wave-like folds of the drapery echo the contours of the figure.

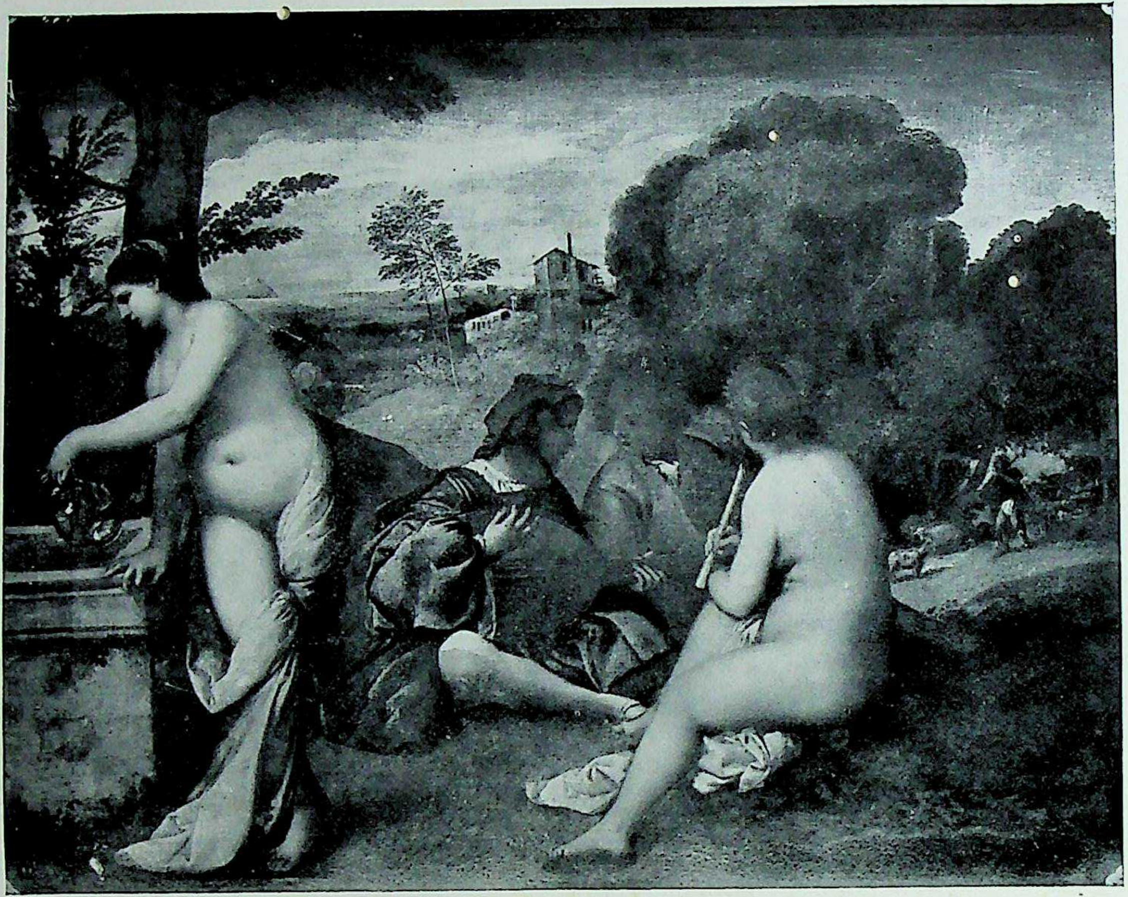
The glory of the picture lies in the superb rendering of the glowing surface of the flesh, as though Giorgione, to borrow Pater's phrase, had intermingled gold dust with his flesh tints. To George Eliot this lovely woman, sleeping in unconscious beauty in the midst of a radiant landscape, suggested a personification of the Goddess of Purity.

"Cheek and eyebrow touch the fold
Of the raised arm that frames her hair,
Her braided hair in colour like to old
Copper glinting here and there :
While through her skin of olive gold
The scarce carnations mount and share
Faultlessly the oval space
Of her temperate grave face."

MICHAEL FIELD

[*See p.* 32.

PLATE XXXVIII



Louvre

THE CONCERT

BY GIORGIONE

PLATE 38

GIORGIONE

THE CONCERT

VENETIAN SCHOOL
Circa 1477–1511

Louvre

IN this "Pastoral Symphony," where gallant troubadours and fair ladies discourse sweet music in a land of green trees and perpetual sunshine, Giorgione has definitely broken with the traditions of formal composition. Henceforth even the Madonna will descend from her throne and group herself with her attendants in easeful repose among the trees and flowers. It is this intimate association of landscape and figures which marks so great a departure in Venetian art, where the landscape is no longer merely a setting or a background but an integral part of the picture. Giorgione, according to Pater, "is the inventor of genre, of those easily movable pictures which serve neither for uses of devotion nor of allegorical or historic teaching—little groups of real men and women amid congruous furniture or landscape—morsels of actual life, conversation or music or play, but refined upon or idealized, till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar." It is this spirit of poetic mystery, this sense of unrealness in the midst of reality, which lends fascination to Giorgione's idyll, as it is the want of them which leaves us cold and unsympathetic admirers of Manet's "Déjeuner sur l'herbe," for all its accomplished naturalism. How beautiful here is the swinging outline of the nude woman on the left pouring water from a crystal flask into a well. And even restoration has not succeeded in destroying the gorgeousness of the deep-chorded colour —the olive-greens of the landscape, the rejoicing reds and pinks of the men's dresses, the gleaming flesh and the palpitating golden atmosphere in which all is enveloped.

[*See p.* 32.

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PLATE 39

TITIAN

SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1477–1576 Borghese Gallery, Rome

THIS picture, described in 1650 by Ridolfi, who had never seen it, as a painting of "Two Maidens at a Fountain," and known since the eighteenth century by the absurd title of "Sacred and Profane Love," has now been interpreted as Aphrodite, in the form of Circe, pleading with Medea for Jason, who is waiting in the wood beyond. Medea, who is in a curiously impossible attitude, neither sitting nor kneeling, grasps a bunch of magic-working herbs in her right hand, while her left rests on a mysterious casket, and she appears to be unaware of Aphrodite's presence. But whatever the meaning of the subject, the beauty of the picture speaks for itself. The mellow landscape beneath the yellow-streaked blue sky is the typical Venetian *mise-en-scène*. Medea's massive cold white draperies accentuate the warm golden flesh tones of the persuasive Aphrodite, which again are thrown into happy relief by the loose crimson mantle that flutters behind her and the warm white of her diaphanous scarf. Her figure is almost identical in design with the standing woman in Giorgione's "Concert." In both the right arm and hand support the weight of the body, and the legs are crossed to allow the same unbroken line.

[*See p.* 32.

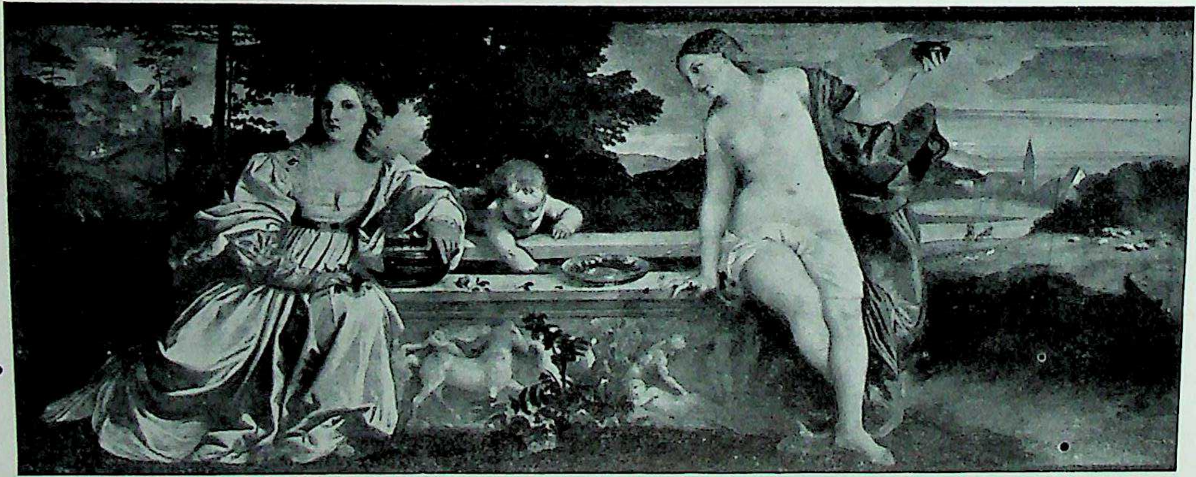
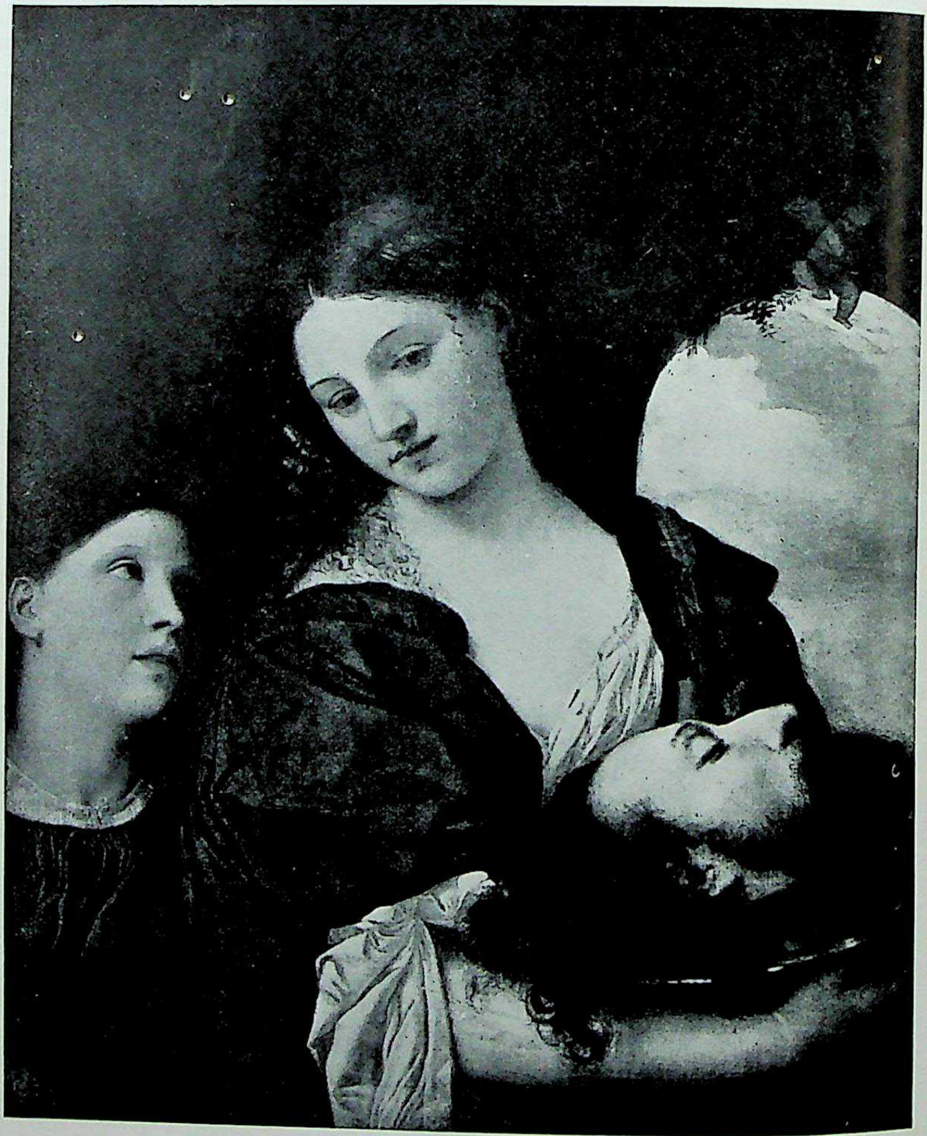


Photo Anderson

Borghese Gallery, Rome

SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE

BY TITIAN



Doria Palace, Rome

THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS

BY TITIAN

PLATE 40

TITIAN

THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1477–1576 Doria Palace, Rome

NOWHERE, perhaps, are Titian's habitual serenity and well-bred calm more strikingly exhibited than in his rendering of what in modern hands has become the most disagreeable of subjects. There is no trace of cruelty or sensuality in this Salome's gentle face with its sweet mouth; only the averted head and sidelong glance are perhaps a little timid, not even so much as fearful. This noble Venetian lady could surely never have dreamed of demanding so gruesome a reward for her dancing. The head is treated with the same tranquil dignity and quiet disregard of any suggestion of the horrible.

The picture was painted during the time when Titian was still steeped in the Giorgionesque spirit, the time of the "Sacred and Profane Love" and of the "Man with the Glove." It even passed for long under Giorgione's name, before the more exact criticism of modern times detected Titian's characteristic touch in the draperies and recognized in Salome the type of woman he had made his own. The colour also is that of Titian, though differing from Giorgione's only as slightly as one great musician's rendering of the same fugue may differ from that of another. Other versions of this picture are known.

[*See p.* 33.

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PLATE 41

TITIAN

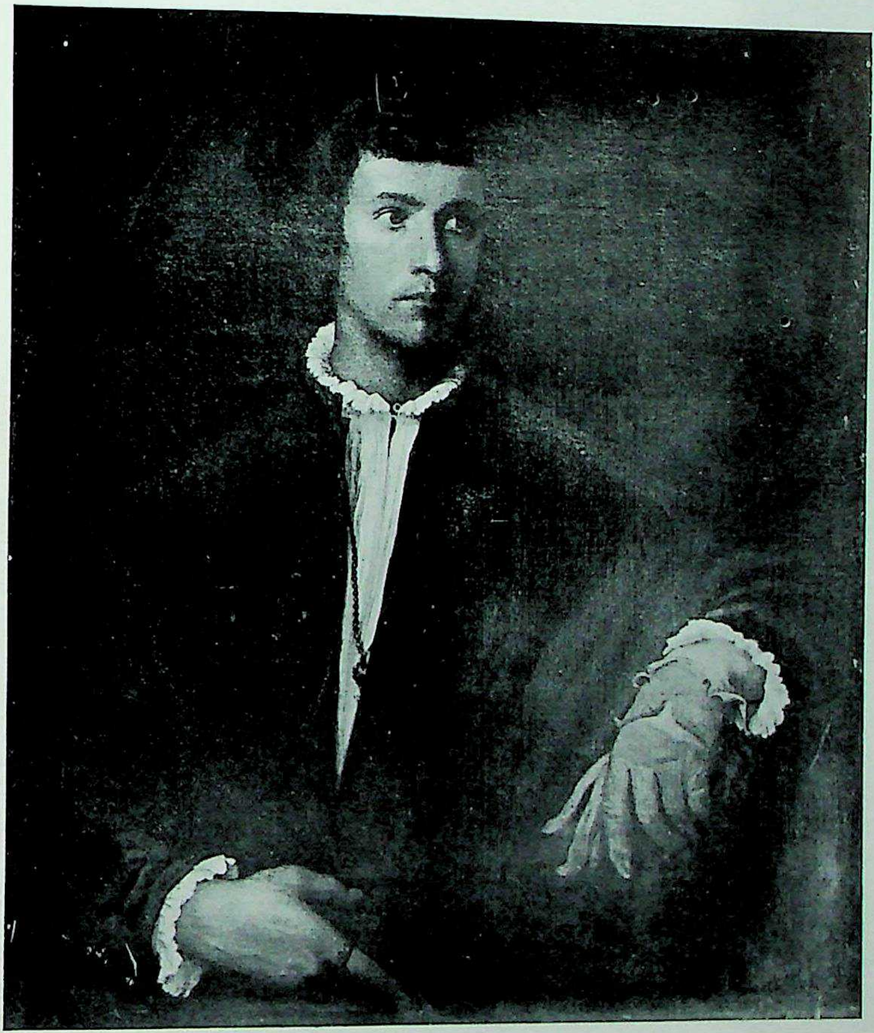
THE MAN WITH THE GLOVE

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1477–1576 Louvre

SINGULAR charm and refinement characterize this portrait of some young Venetian gentleman whose very name has been lost in the lapse of the centuries. His whole bearing, in its ease and dignified reserve, proclaims the patrician, and the strong, serene face and steady eyes attest the innate nobility of the man. His dress is of the simplest—black relieved only by the narrow triangle of white shirt at the throat and the dainty white ruffles of the sleeves. Nor are there any accessories to take the attention from the head, set so proudly on the shapely neck. It is impossible not to feel Giorgione's influence in the warm living look and the sweetness and charm of the presentment. We find here, too, that calm acceptance of the world, that absence of care which distinguish the painters of this romantic tradition.

It may well be questioned whether the picture is as good a likeness as it undoubtedly is a fine painting. In the first part of his career Titian portrayed his sitters as he imaged them in his mind, composing a fantasy on the theme given him. Later, when his experience of life and the world had widened, he became less subjective and gave to his portraits more of their own individual character. The picture is signed on the parapet on which the left hand rests.

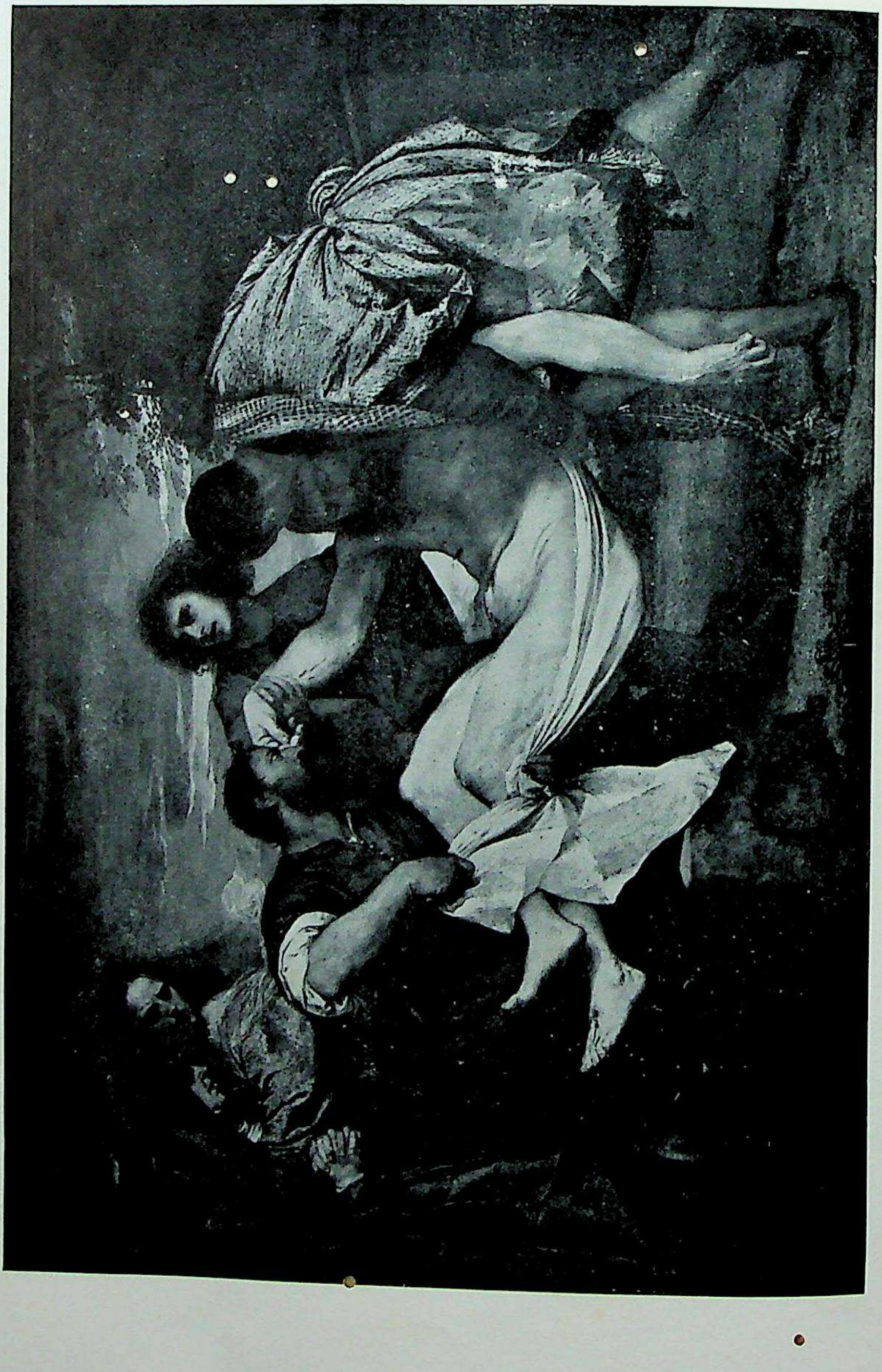
[*See p.* 33.



Louvre

THE MAN WITH THE GLOVE

BY TITIAN



ENTOMBMENT
BY TITIAN

Louvre

PLATE 42

TITIAN

ENTOMBMENT

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1477–1576 Louvre

FOR grandeur of composition, perfect balance and rhythmic sweep of line, the "Entombment" ranks as one of Titian's most consummate creations. Like many of his early works it is undated, and critics have assigned it variously to the years between 1518 and 1530. In the long life of this centenarian it ranks as an early work, and exhibits once again the curious persistency of Giorgione's influence—Giorgione who had been dead some ten years or more. It was painted for the Duke of Mantua, and belonged once to Charles I of England.

The subject is treated with Titian's characteristic restraint. There is no loud expression of grief, no discordant note jars on the ear. Even the weight of the body is not allowed to strain the arms of the bearers; the cloth hangs limp and shows no pull upon it. The head and face of the dead Christ are in deep shadow, the light falling on the lower part of the body and on the beautifully modelled arms. St. John's dramatic gesture, as holding one of Christ's hands he looks towards the Virgin, brings the two groups into relationship. The sombre landscape and cloudy sky are in keeping with the human drama. For all that it has darkened somewhat, the colouring is still rich and harmonious. The blue of the sky is repeated in the Virgin's cloak, and this is balanced by the broken pink of the tunic worn by the man on the right, from whose shoulders falls a long many-coloured scarf. The contrast between the warm brown flesh tints of the living and the livid pallor of the dead body is strikingly expressed.

[*See p.* 33.

PLATE 43

TITIAN

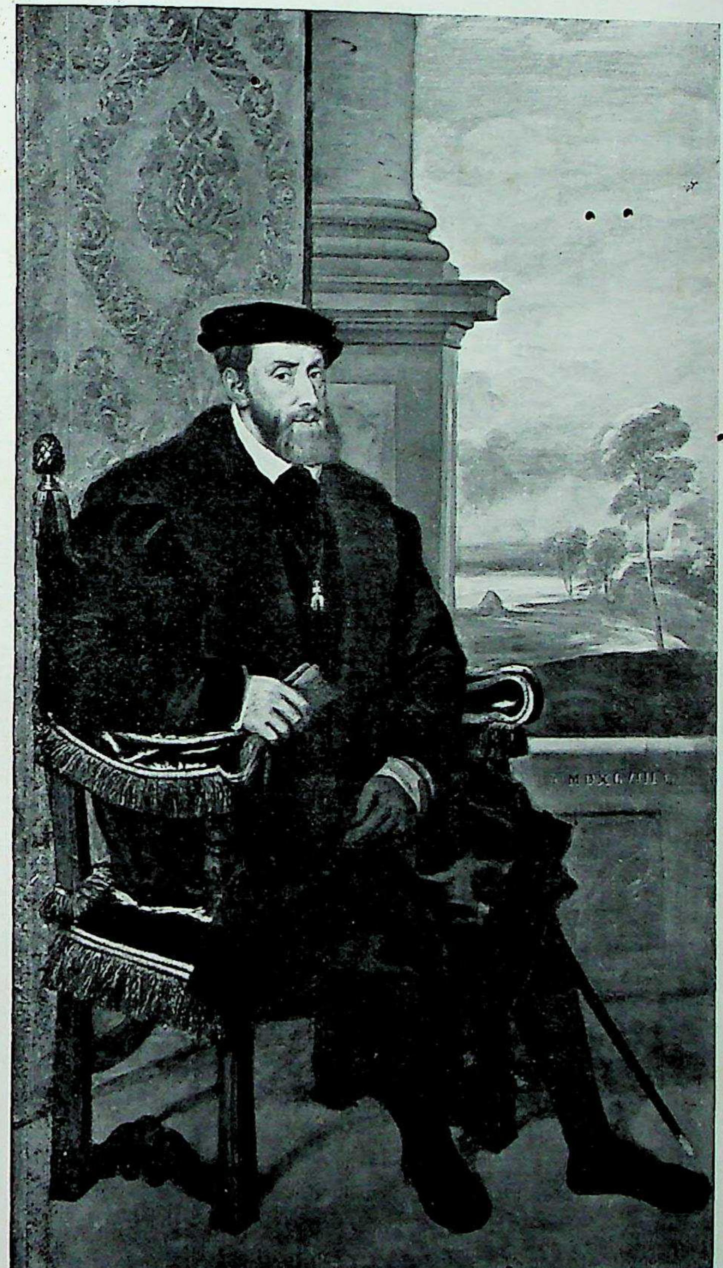
PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1477–1576 Pinakothek, Munich

IN 1548, some thirty years later than the "Man with the Glove," Titian was called to Augsburg to commemorate Charles v's great victory of Mühlberg. In the equestrian portrait, now at Madrid, the conqueror is represented in full armour upon his charger, riding from the field of victory. In this portrait at Munich, Titian seems to have sunk the monarch in the man. There is none of the elation of triumph in this suffering world-weary face, on which the cares of state rather than the joys of power have left their impress. The crimson-covered chair, the red carpet and brocaded curtain, set off the plain black of the Emperor's dress, trimmed with fur even in the height of summer, its only ornament the golden fleece. The silvery-toned landscape seen beyond the open loggia is brushed in with extraordinary lightness, anticipating the sketchy backgrounds of Rubens. The pillar and curtain and this glimpse of a conventionalized landscape became, indeed, the orthodox setting for the *portrait-de-parade*, and have so remained almost to our own day.

[*See p.* 33.

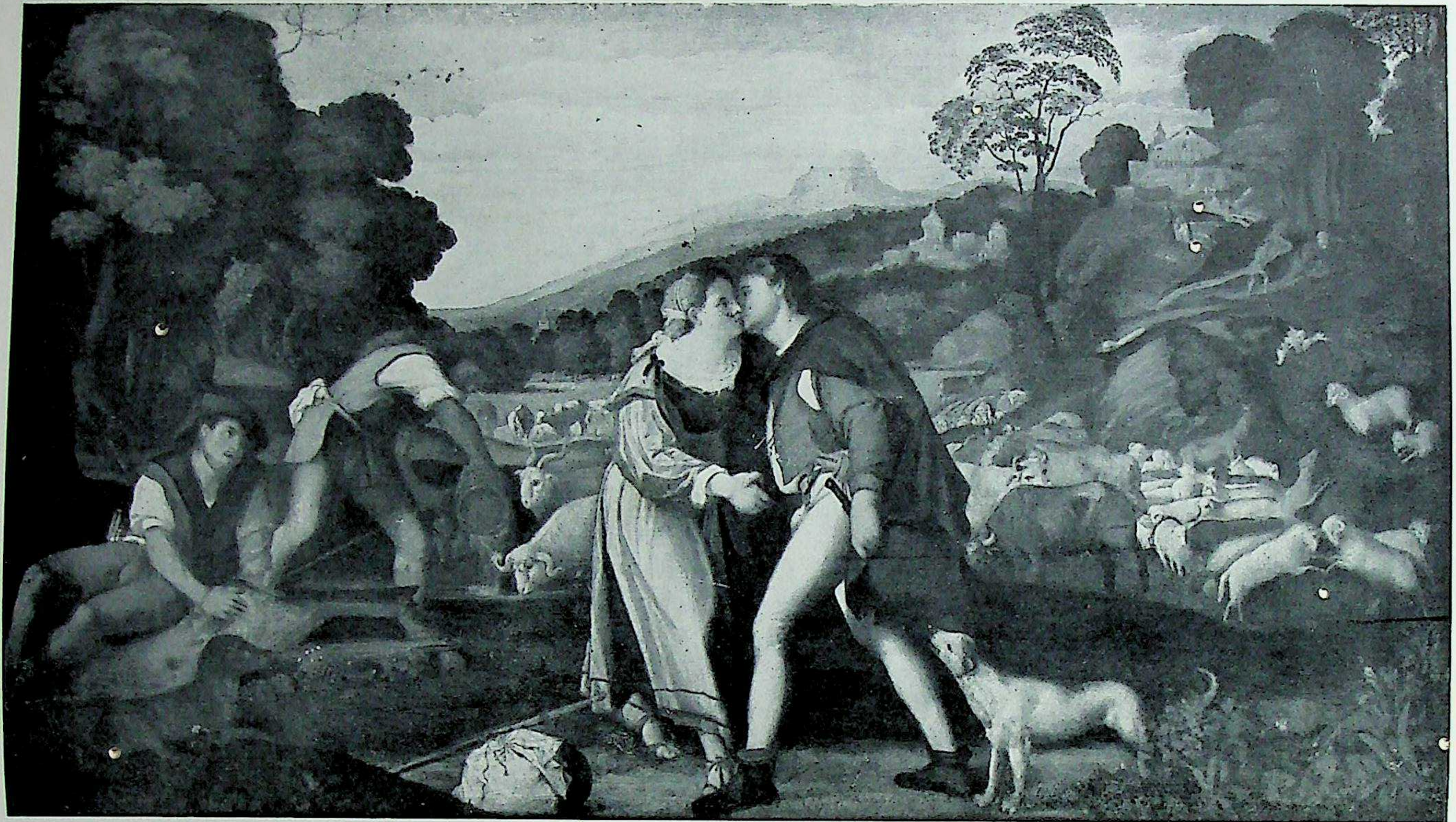
PLATE XLIII



Munich

PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

BY TITIAN



MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL
BY PALMA VECCH

Dresden

PLATE 44

PALMA VECCHIO

MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL

VENETIAN SCHOOL
Circa 1480–1528

Dresden

REMINISCENCES of Palma Vecchio's native countryside, where swarthy Bergamesque shepherds lead their flocks in fertile valleys and distant blue crags kiss the sky, must have stirred in his mind when, late in life, he chose this smiling landscape for the meeting of these lovers. Jacob's brown cloak over his deep blue tunic and long white hose is finely opposed to Rachel's frock of light crimson with orange-coloured sleeves. She is of the same ample fair-haired type that we meet in all Palma's later pictures. The scarlet stockings of the shepherd, who gazes at the meeting with all the wondering sympathy such a love-scene would evoke, introduce a colour somewhat rare in Venetian paintings. And these brighter tints are set off by the subdued brown landscape sweeping away to the blue mountains. It is possible that Palma's pupil Bonifazio, himself a delightful exponent of *al fresco* scenes, had some hand in this picture, which would be all to his romantic taste.

"What real airy space as the eye passes from level to level, through the long-drawn valley in which Jacob embraces Rachel among the flocks. Nowhere is there a truer instance of that balance, that modulated union of landscape and persons—of the human image and its accessories — already noticed as characteristic of the Venetian school, so that in it neither personage nor scenery is ever a mere pretext for the other" (W. Pater).

[*See p.* 33.

PLATE 45

PARIS BORDONE

THE FISHERMAN'S RING

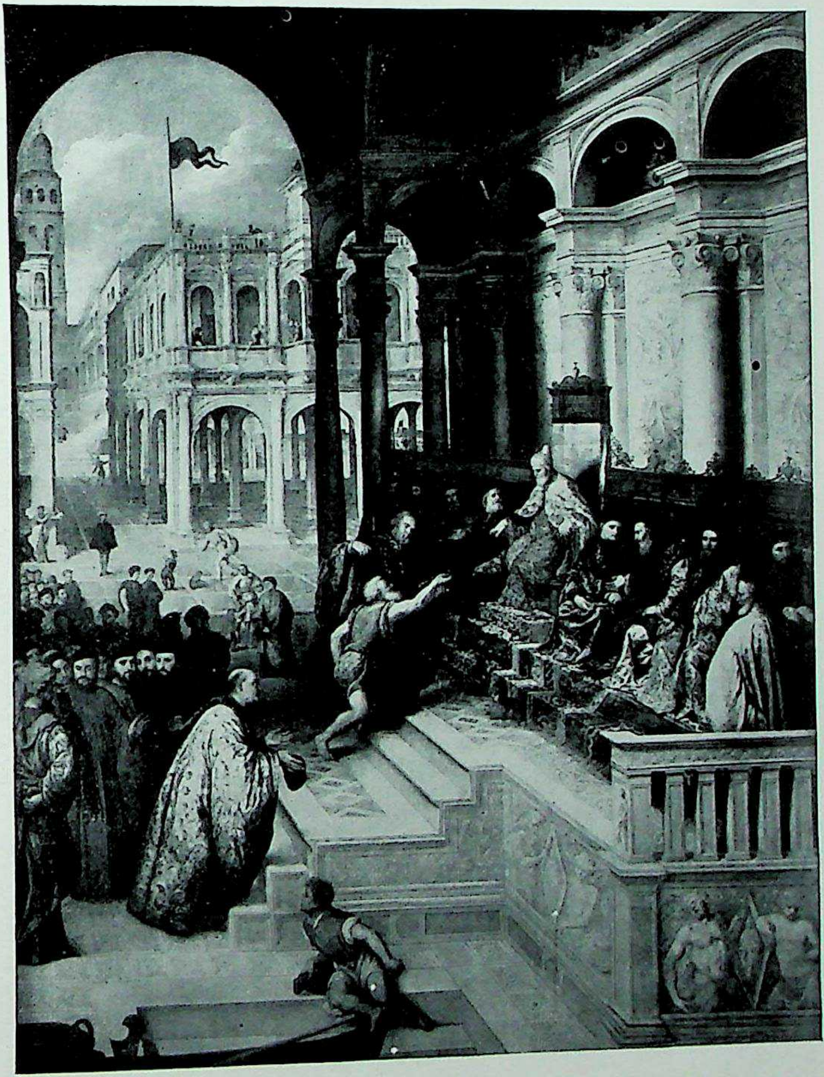
VENETIAN SCHOOL
Circa 1500–1571

Academy, Venice

AMONG the Venetian painters of the sixteenth century Paris Bordone stands somewhat apart. There is no mistaking his works for those of Giorgione, Palma or even his master Titian. Bordone invented a colour-scheme peculiarly his own, of which a luscious wine-red is the trumpet-note. This, his greatest work, was painted while he was still young to celebrate a patriotic legend which relates how, one stormy night in the month of February 1340, St. Mark, St. George and St. Nicholas, the three Patrons of the Republic, dispersed a boat-load of demons who were threatening the city, when St. Mark, drawing off his ring, gave it to the boatman with instructions to carry it to the Doge Gradenigo, that all might know of the miracle which had been wrought.

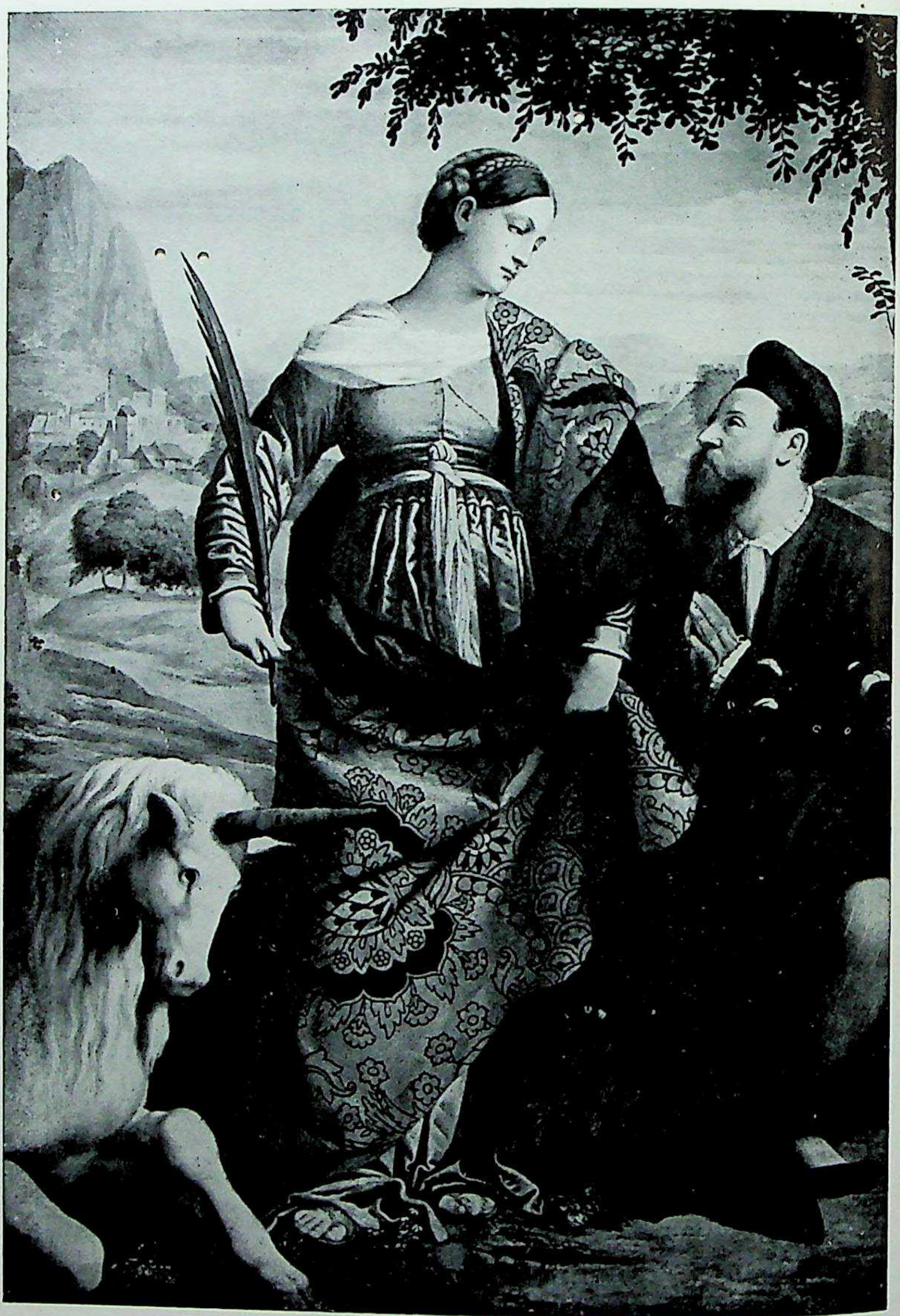
The scene represents the moment when the fisherman, panting with haste and excitement, appears before the Doge sitting in full Council. In the varied reds and crimsons of the Senators' robes Bordone's fancy has had full play. The picture might well be called a triumph in reds. The pomp and circumstance of the scene are intensified by the stately architectural setting, and all this ceremonial splendour is in dramatic contrast to the humble hero of the piece, who in grey tunic with bare legs and arms falls at the Doge's feet. All interest is focused upon this episode in the middle distance, while the foreground is left empty save for a swarthy gondolier crouching on the margin of the canal.

[*See p.* 34.



Academy, Venice

THE FISHERMAN'S RING
BY PARIS BORDONE



Vienna

GIUSTINA
BY MORETTO

PLATE 46

MORETTO

S. GIUSTINA

School of Brescia
Circa 1498–1555

Imperial Gallery, Vienna

In the art of Moretto, the chief painter of Brescia, there is a grave impressiveness which stamps it as distinct from the works of such of his Venetian contemporaries as Bordone and Bonifazio, with their predilection for the brighter and more varied aspects of life.

This heroic monumental picture combines all Moretto's finest qualities. The Paduan virgin, in her ample draperies, bears herself with the stateliness and dignity of a Roman empress, the palm of her martyrdom carried like a sceptre. The unicorn, emblem of virginity, crouches at her feet. Her lovely head is turned in majestic condescension towards the Brescian gentleman who, kneeling loverlike beside her in ardent devotion, seems to worship at once the saint and the woman. Here Moretto shows himself the keen inspired portrait painter in whose canvases the nobles of his city live once again. The colouring is gorgeous, but not in the Venetian sense, though Bordone himself might have envied the crimson of S. Giustina's robe. There is here no golden light reflecting an unreal radiance over the whole scene. Moretto's grey harmonies and cool cloudy sky have more affinity with the *plein-air* painters of a much later date than with the Venetians, in whose pictures it was always summer. The sky is very luminous and the distance melts into silver near the horizon.

[*See p.* 34.

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PLATE 47

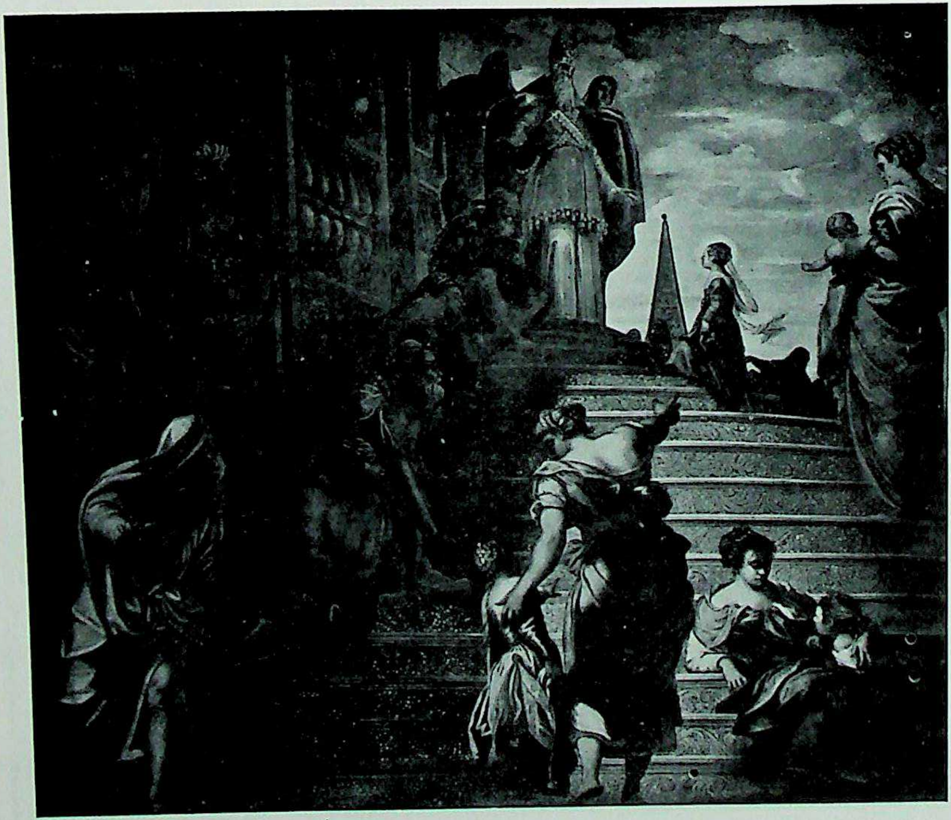
JACOPO TINTORETTO

PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1518–1594 S. Maria dell' Orto, Venice

THE "Presentation of the Virgin," an early work, painted with many others for the church in which the artist now lies buried, displays all the painter's greatest qualities. The spacious monumental flight of steps in bold perspective leads the eye to the summit, where the High-priest, stately and rigid, awaits the child-like figure of the Virgin, the object of all eyes. The composition inevitably challenges comparison with Titian's version of the same subject, but here the types are more heroic, the conception grander and more dramatic. There, too, the chief actors are set against a background of architecture, while Tintoretto so orders his perspective that the figures of the Virgin and High-priest are silhouetted against the dusky blue sky. The obelisk between them is another of his borrowings from Titian. A row of beggars, grotesque as a series of gargoyles, border the stairs, displaying a grim interest in the scene. A magnificent figure is that of the splendidly developed woman at the foot of the steps, who, with superb gesture, directs her child's gaze upwards towards the Virgin. There is something of Michelangelesque boldness in her vigorous attitude and in the colossal proportions of her figure. If Tintoretto is apt too often to sacrifice beauty of colour and, as his contemporaries said, paint in lead, here he wields a golden brush, and it is in a flood of amber light that the future Madonna climbs the steep stairway.

[*See p.* 35.

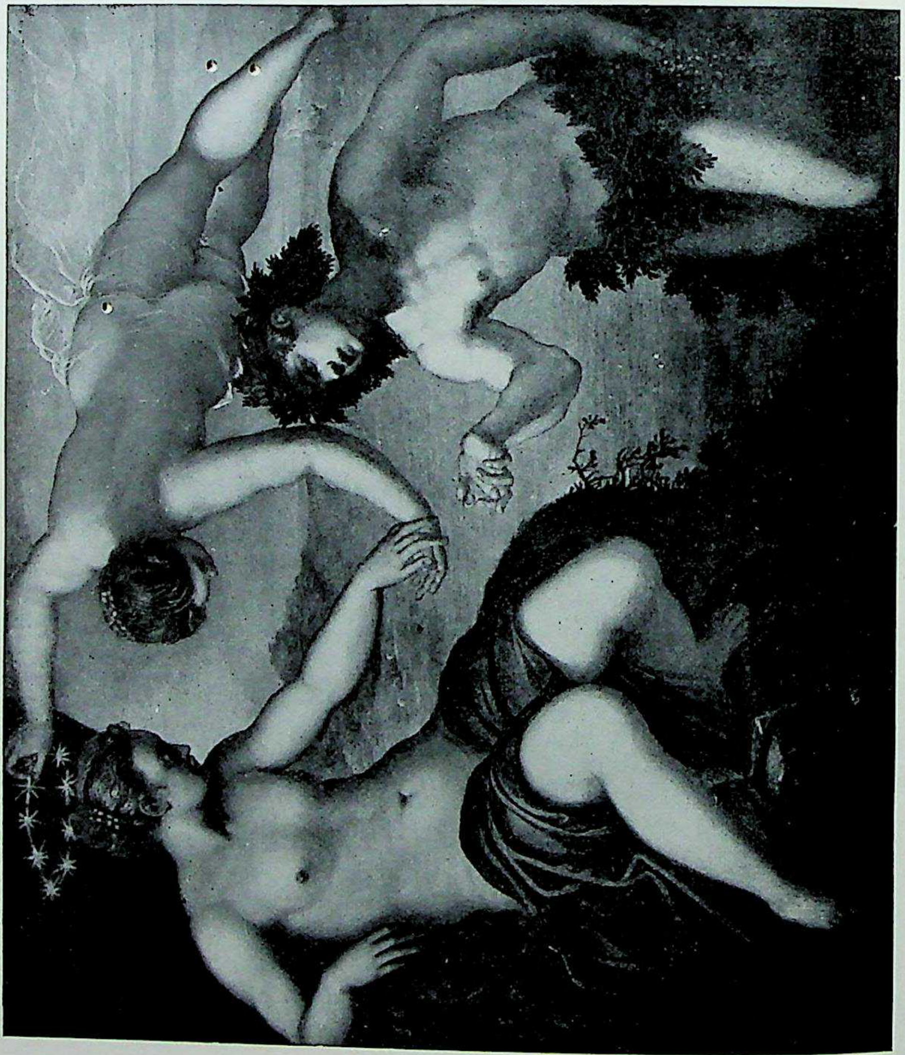


S. Maria dell' Orto, Venice

PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN

BY TINTORETTO

PLATE XLVIII



MARRIAGE OF BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

BY TINTORETTO

Ducal Palace, Venice

PLATES

PLATE 48

JACOPO TINTORETTO

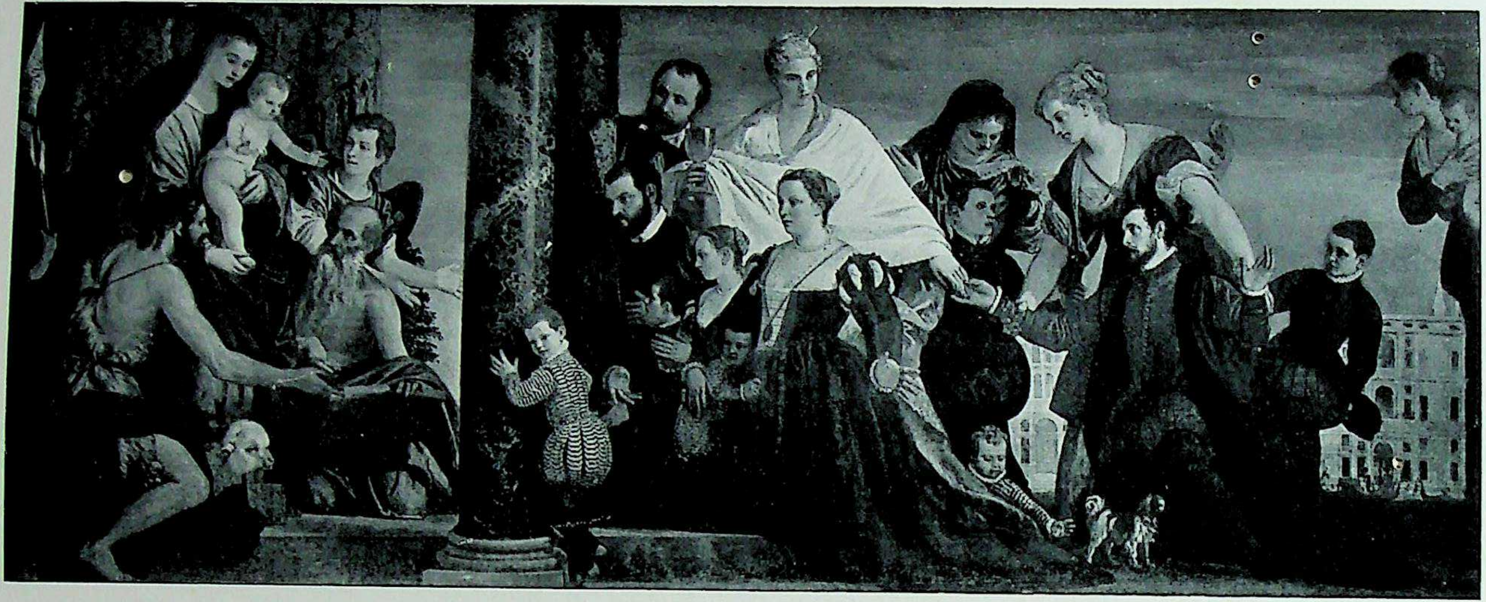
MARRIAGE OF BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1518–1594 Ducal Palace, Venice

THIS picture, a veritable lyric in paint, is in Tintoretto's silvery manner, and nowhere has he shown himself a greater colourist. The deep green water is of a wonderful transparency, and, with the subdued azure of the sky, the blues of Ariadne's drapery and the cool flesh tones, combines to make up a scheme of shimmering opalescent colour. No less masterly is the composition, in which the flowing lines of the nude figures are worked into a kind of flower-like circular design, the arms converging towards the centre, where Bacchus is about to place the ring on Ariadne's hand, resting lightly on that of Venus. There is sufficient space round each figure to give a sense of freedom of movement, yet so close is Venus to Bacchus that her shadow falls upon his neck. In her flying poise there is nothing of effort, nor are we oppressed by the weight of a solid body floating in the air. The feeling of movement is expressed in the white gauzy drapery fluttering loose against the sky. But it is above all in the lighting of the picture that the secret of its magic lies. Like Correggio, Tintoretto has revelled in recording the play of light and shadow on dimpled flesh. Ariadne is in full sunlight, which seems to radiate from her, the poetical figure of Bacchus in half shadow, the light falling upon his cheek and right arm.

"In no other picture has a poem of feeling and fancy, a romance of varied lights and shades, a symphony of delicately blended hues, a play of attitude and movement, transitory but in no sense forced or violent, been more successfully expressed by means more simple or with effect more satisfying" (J. A. Symonds).

[*See p.* 35.



Dresden

THE CUCCINA FAMILY BEFORE THE MADONNA

BY PAOLO VERONESE

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PLATE 49

PAOLO VERONESE

THE CUCCINA FAMILY BEFORE THE MADONNA

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1528–1588 Dresden

THIS picture is one of a series of four great canvases, now in the Dresden Gallery, painted to adorn the palace of the Cuccini, one of the great and wealthy patrician families of Venice. The pictures are alike in size, their oblong form being well adapted to the spacious but low rooms of the palace, which they decorated in the manner of a frieze.

The family party, escorted by Faith, Hope and Love, have seemingly just alighted from their gondola, and proceed towards the loggia on the left, where the Madonna, attended by St. Jerome, St. John the Baptist and a boy-angel, waits to receive them. The central figure in the procession is the mother of the family, who, in festive tawny orange-coloured attire, kneels, surrounded by husband and children, in front of Faith, a gracious figure in mellow white drapery bordered with gold. Love, clad in rich red, and Hope, in green, lead forward the other members of the family, while on the extreme right a buxom nurse carries the baby of the party. Nor are Veronese's usual paraphernalia of small dogs and mischievous boys wanting here.

The wealth of colour, the swift brilliant brush-work, the silvery harmonies of sky and architecture, the almost impressionist treatment of the background, as well as the rhythmical composition and a certain noble simplicity of feeling, reveal Veronese as an artist worthy to rank with the greatest of the Venetians.

[*See p.* 35.

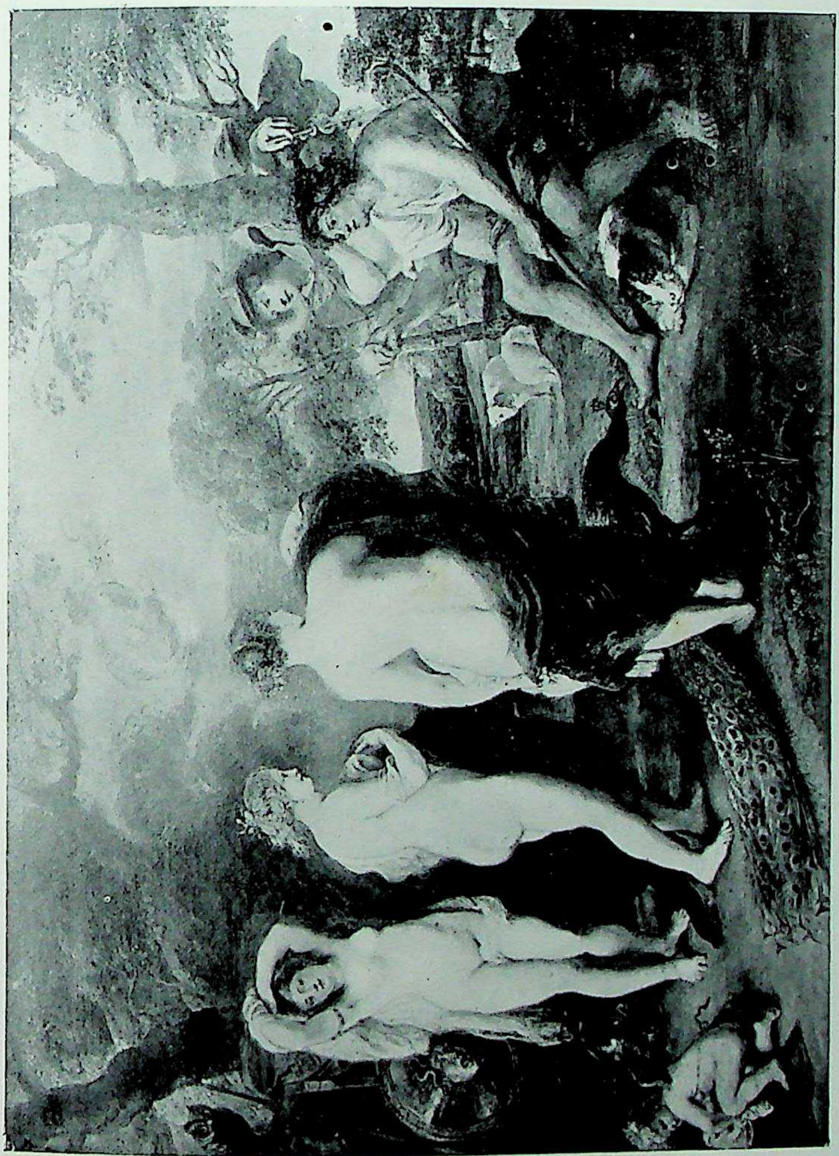
PLATE 50

PETER PAUL RUBENS

JUDGMENT OF PARIS

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1577–1640 National Gallery

HERE, in a sylvan landscape, are assembled the shepherd Paris and swift Mercury with the three competitors for the golden apple, which cunning Discord, hovering in the clouds above Juno, has offered to her who shall be pronounced the fairest. No doubt it was as difficult for Paris, as now for us, to decide between the beautiful, proud Juno, the fair, seductive Venus and the gracious Minerva. These fair women, no slender, classical divinities indeed, but massive, matronly types, are a veritable triumph of flesh-painting. Rubens has no rival in the rendering of flesh, its texture, its colour, its very life. Lovely is the cherubic little Cupid in the corner, one of the delicious, healthy babes that Rubens delighted to portray. The contrast between the ruddy, sunburnt figures of Paris and Mercury and the gleaming carnations of this Cupid and the three goddesses, enhanced by the dark draperies that reveal them, is characteristically emphasized. The luxuriant landscape, clothed with shady trees, melts into the distant blue hills, beneath a sky of wonderful, luminous depth and transparency. Rubens has brushed them in with a full sense of the decorative requirements of his painted idyll, for here, indeed, is no mere realistic landscape, but the truly poetic setting for an Olympian fairy tale enacted on earth.



National Gallery

JUDGMENT OF PARIS

BY RUBENS

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Nowhere in the whole picture is there a hard outline: one form melts into another almost imperceptibly. Here are all Rubens's favourite colours, the warm scarlet in Mercury's flying cloak and behind Minerva's uplifted arms, the deep crimson of Juno's draperies, the olive-brown Titianesque landscape and the cool blue of the sky. This is Rubens at his best, a work entirely from his own brush. Another fine rendering of this subject hangs in the Prado.

[*See p.* 36.

PLATE 51

PETER PAUL RUBENS

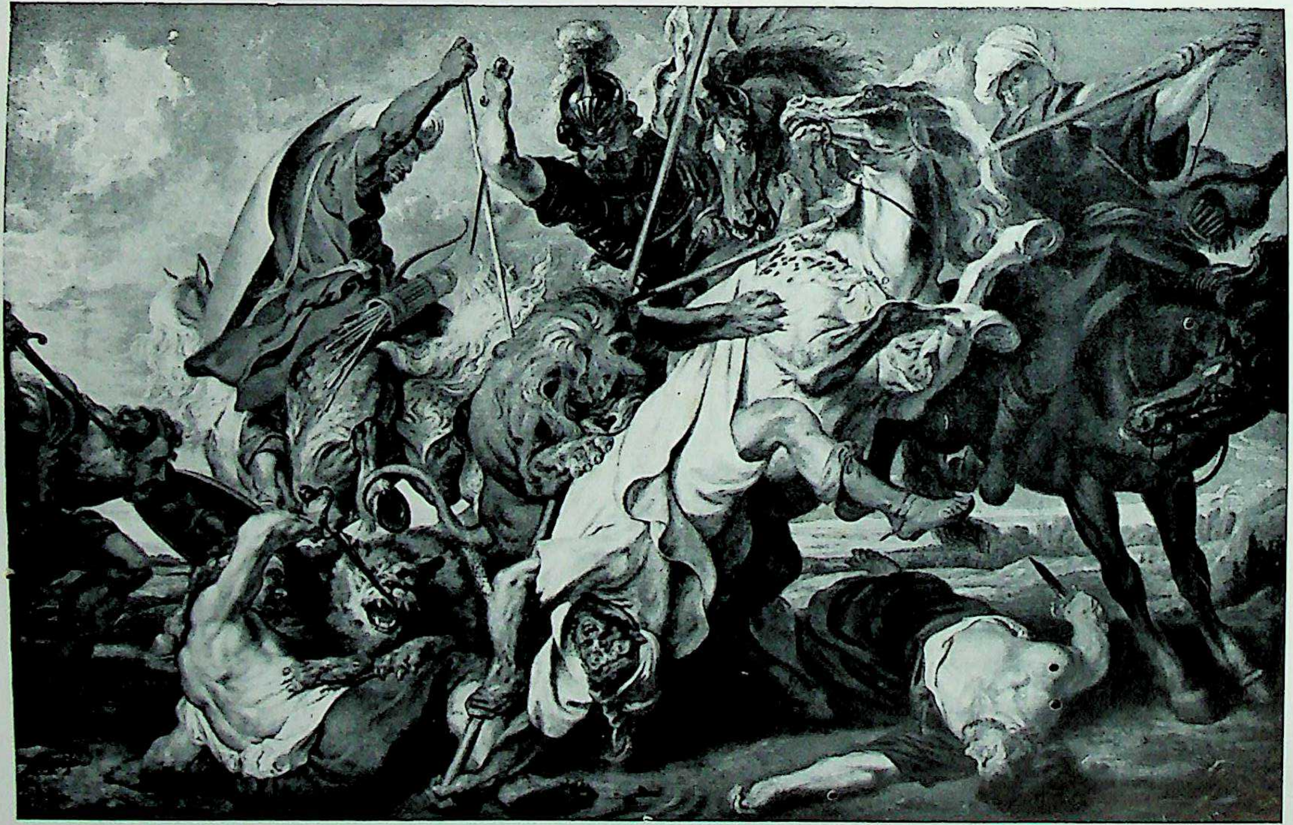
LION HUNT

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1577-1640 Pinakothek, Munich

IN this almost overpowering canvas Rubens has paid back something of his debt to Italy. It was painted within a few years of his return from that country, and, like all his versions of the same subject, of which this is the best, was evidently inspired by the group of horsemen in Leonardo's great lost battle-piece, which Rubens carefully copied, his drawing being among the treasures of the Louvre. But in vigour, not to say violence, the prototype has been left far behind. It may indeed be questioned whether the art of painting, any more than that of sculpture, is suited to express such a climax of furious movement and tumultuous energy as are here displayed, where hunter and hunted fall together in a welter of struggling forms. But at least there can be no doubt of the genius which could render it pictorially.

The composition, firm and monumental in the central group, becomes looser as it opens out. However knotted the whole appears, each figure is really treated with a certain independence and allowed its due space and individuality. The sense of the overwhelming is emphasized by the placing of the figures in the extreme foreground of the picture, almost threatening the spectator, though by way of relief the eye is allowed a loophole of escape between the foreshortened figure of the prostrate hunter on the right and the legs of the prancing horses to a glimpse of sky and distant horizon. The absence of any middle distance again helps to accentuate the prevailing impression of instant and perilous imminence.

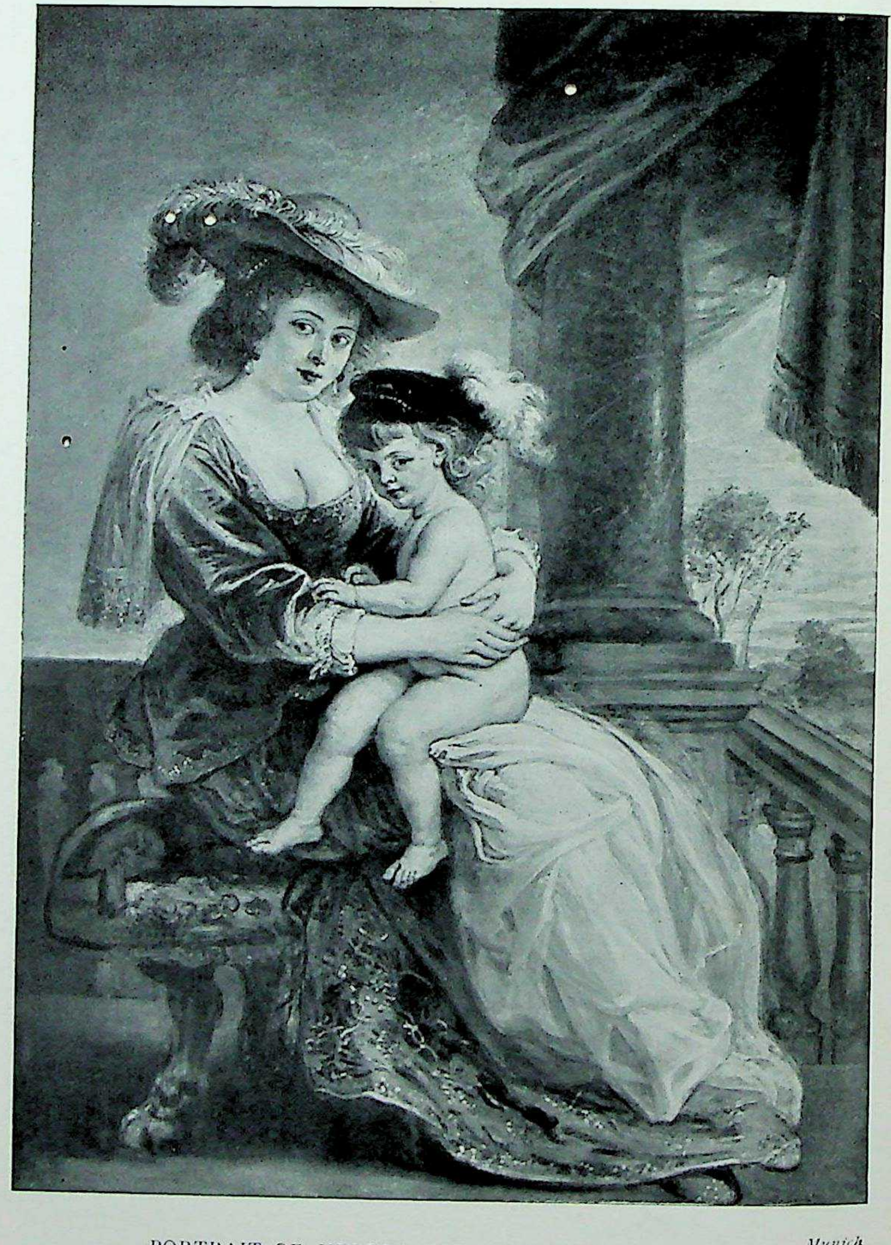
[*See p.* 36.



Munich

LION HUNT

BY RUBENS



Munich

PORTRAIT OF HELENA FOURMENT AND HER SON

BY RUBENS

PLATE 52

PETER PAUL RUBENS

PORTRAIT OF HELENA FOURMENT AND HER SON

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1577–1640 Pinakothek, Munich

NOWHERE is Rubens more fresh and delightful than in the portraits he painted of the young wife with whom, during the last ten years of his life, he enjoyed a renewal of youth and happiness. He seems to have painted this subject with all the freedom and bravura of work that is done *con amore*—for pleasure, not for profit. Helena Fourment with one or more of her children, Helena in bridal attire or taking the air in her garden on her husband's arm, Helena attended by her page—in every charming and intimate connection we meet her in the picture-galleries of Europe. And nowhere is she more attractive than here, seated in an open balcony in the warm air, her little boy sunning himself on her lap. It is an astonishing piece of painting, brushed in with the swift light brilliance of a happy inspiration. Never has Rubens achieved colour more lovely than the shimmering greens and whites of Helena's dress; and the boy's black cap, set so jauntily upon his yellow curls, strikes exactly the right note. It is easy to see where the painter found his model for the delicious Cupids and Amorini which make happy riot in his pictures. The portrait was originally painted as a three-quarter length, and was afterwards added to by the artist without disturbing the concentration of the central *motif*.

The truth of Pater's remark that "the peculiarity of the work of Rubens is a sense of momentary transition, as if the colours were even now melting in it," is strikingly illustrated here.

[*See p.* 37.

PLATE 53

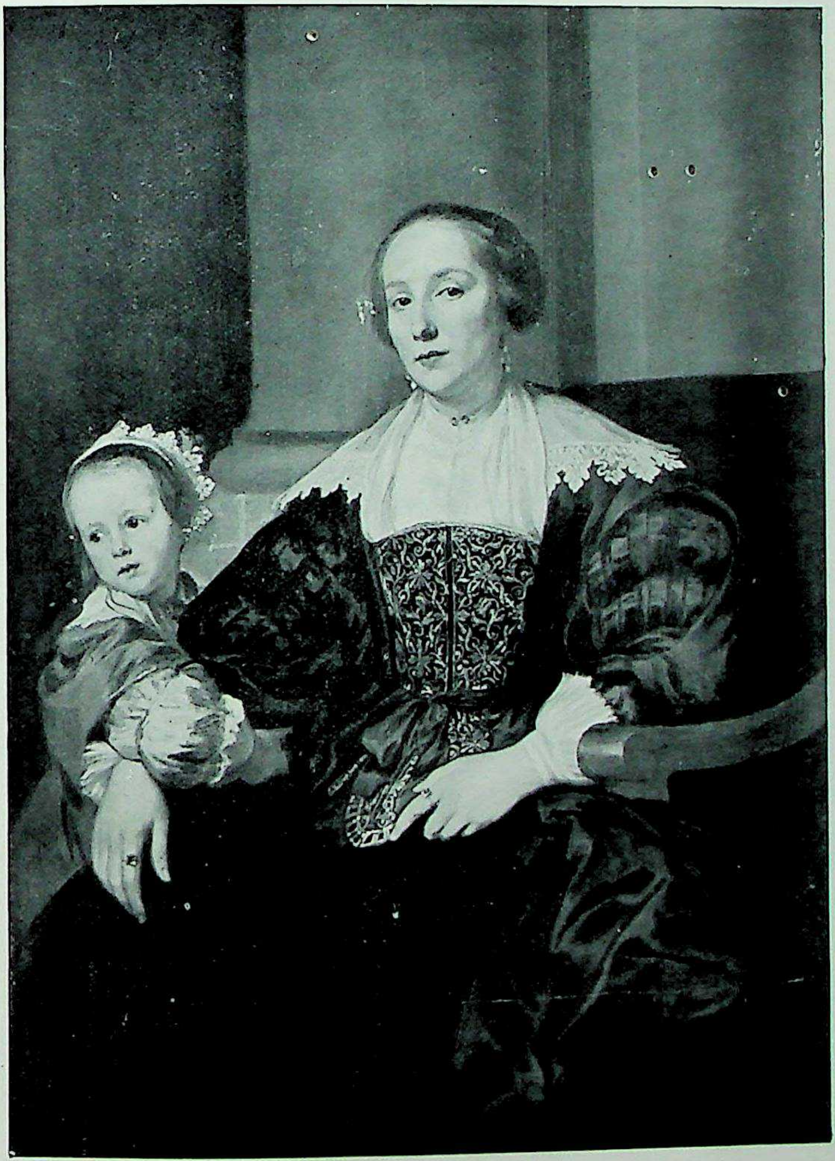
A. VAN DYCK

PORTRAIT OF MADAME DE NOLE

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1599–1641 Pinakothek, Munich

It must have been shortly after Van Dyck's return from Italy in 1626 that this portrait and the companion-piece of the lady's husband, the Antwerp sculptor Colyns de Nole, were painted. Fresh from his triumphant series of Genoese portraits, fresh from all he had seen and learned from the great Italians, Van Dyck returned to his home, and naturally sought the society of his artist friends, many of whom, like Snyders and his family, sat to him at this time. And, perhaps as a result of his new environment, there is in the pictures he then produced, especially those of his personal friends, a certain careless grace and ease which are wanting in the portraits of his aristocratic clients in Italy. The pose here is deliciously natural and unstudied, the head inclining slightly to the left, a poise which is repeated in the child. The face is intelligent and serene, the expression womanly. The little girl, clinging in unaffected timidity to her mother, is a triumph of child-painting, wonderfully sincere and true in sentiment. Yet for all the easy composition there is that indefinable dignity and distinction in the treatment of head and hands, which testify to what Van Dyck had learned and absorbed in the South.

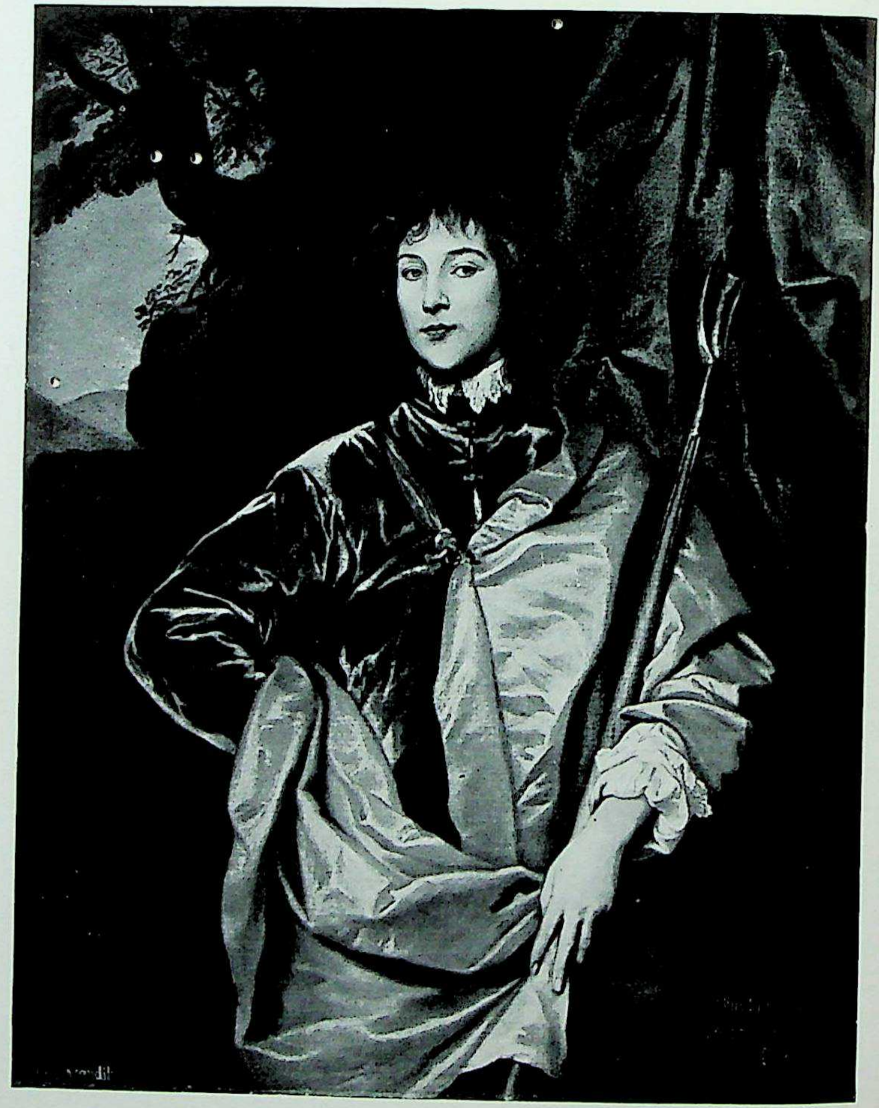
[*See p.* 37.



Munich

PORTRAIT OF MADAME DE NOLE

BY VAN DYCK



PORTRAIT OF PHILIP LORD WHARTON

BY VAN DYCK

St. Petersburg

PLATE 54

A. VAN DYCK

PORTRAIT OF PHILIP LORD WHARTON

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1599–1641 Hermitage, St. Petersburg

AFTER the elaborate negotiations with Charles I which resulted in Van Dyck's establishment in England, the painter soon found sitters enough to suit his somewhat fastidious taste, but among them surely none more attractive than the youthful Lord Wharton. The portrait, in which the boy, for he was not yet of age, poses as a shepherd with his crook, was probably painted in 1632 in honour of his marriage. Here indeed was a model after the painter's own heart, with youth, beauty and elegance so happily combined. In this spirit the artist represents him here, rejoicing in the youth, revealing the beauty and emphasizing the elegance of the young lord, masquerading, it has been suggested, as the shepherd Paris, the judge of beauty, in some court contest, in his brown velvet tunic and golden-yellow cloak. With the same touch of affectation the painter drapes the beautiful green curtain against his background of rocks and trees. His palette is of the simplest here—these browns, greens and yellows constituting the only colours, with a single touch of white in the lace. The lighting is admirable, face and hands united by the shimmering reflections on the folds. It is strange to recall that this youthful Squire of Dames, so essentially characteristic of the Cavaliers of his day, developed in later life into a strong and self-reliant Parliamentarian leader; yet such is the fact.

[*See p.* 38.

PLATE 55

A. VAN DYCK

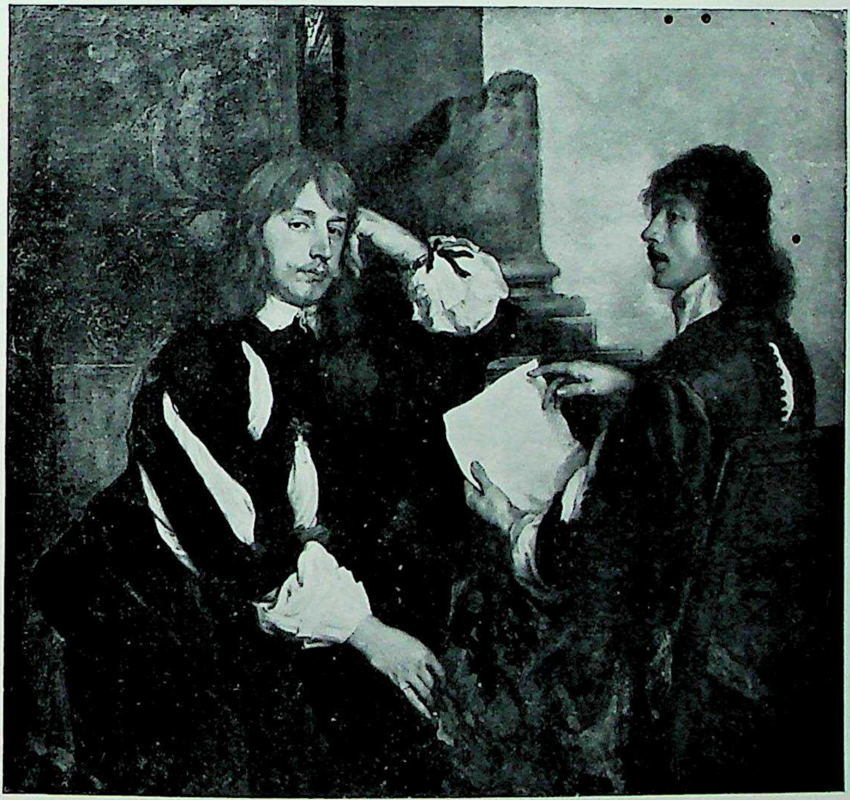
PORTRAITS OF CAREW AND KILLIGREW

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1599–1641 Windsor Castle

IN that long series of double portraits by Van Dyck, which includes such masterpieces as the Princes Louis and Rupert of Bavaria, Lords John and Bernard Stuart and the Earls of Bristol and Bedford, there is none where the artist's mastery over his subject is more complete than in this, perhaps, less-known picture. The seated figure with long fair hair on the left is without doubt Tom Killigrew, the gay and amusing Restoration dramatist and page of honour to Charles I, whom Pepys describes sympathetically as "a merry droll, but a gentleman of great esteem with the King, who told us many merry stories." His companion in the picture was formerly believed to be Thomas Carew the poet, but difficulties of age and date make it more probable that we have here Killigrew's close friend, William Murray, afterwards Earl of Desart.

Technically the picture is supreme, the black dresses slashed with luminous white giving character and pattern to the whole. The composition, based largely on the arrangement of the hands and the papers which each holds, is in delicate balance, while the light is finely distributed without too obvious concentration. There is as yet no trace of the hastier, slighter methods of painting which Van Dyck adopted later in his English period. On the other hand, we find here, as in the earlier portraits of his artist friends, something of that feeling for character which sympathetic sitters seem to have had power to call up in him. The picture is signed and dated 1638.

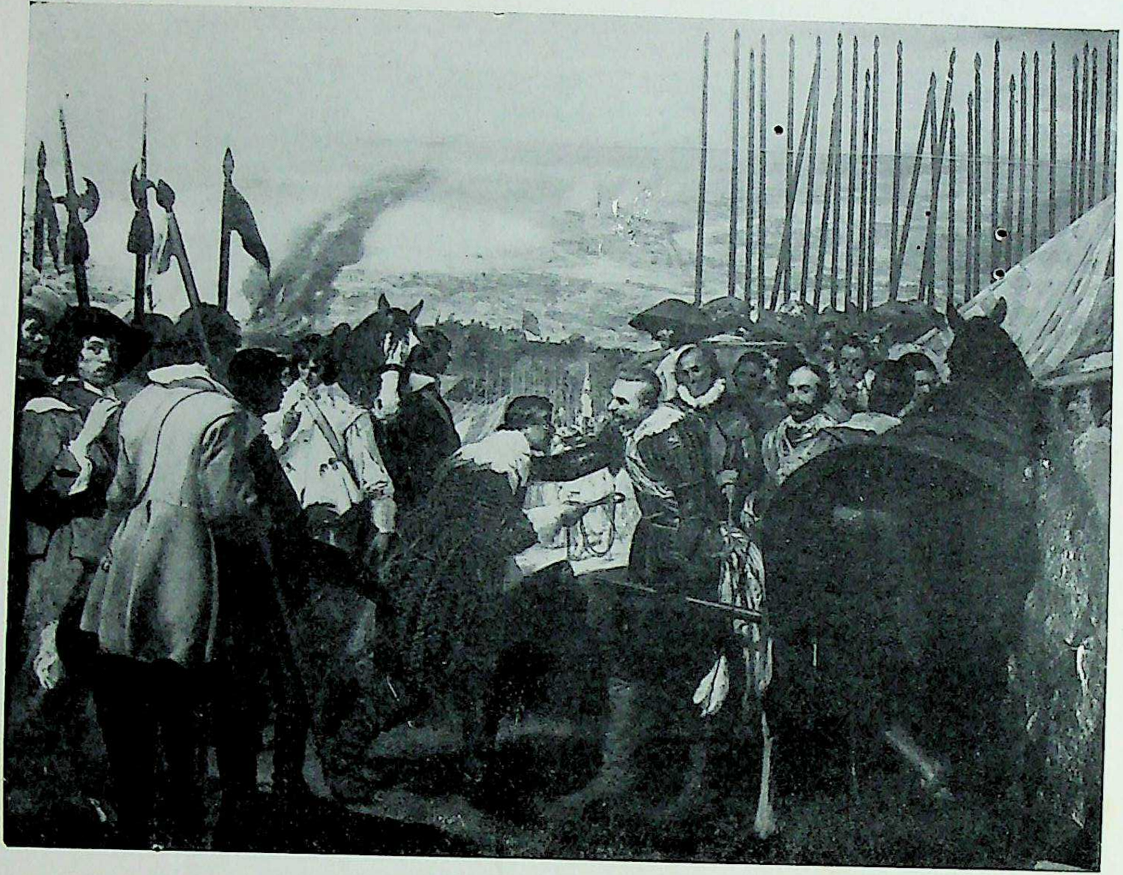
[*See p.* 38.



Windsor

PORTRAIT OF CAREW AND KILLIGREW

BY BAN DYCK



Prado

SURRENDER OF BREDA
BY VELAZQUEZ

PLATE 56

VELAZQUEZ

SURRENDER OF BREDA

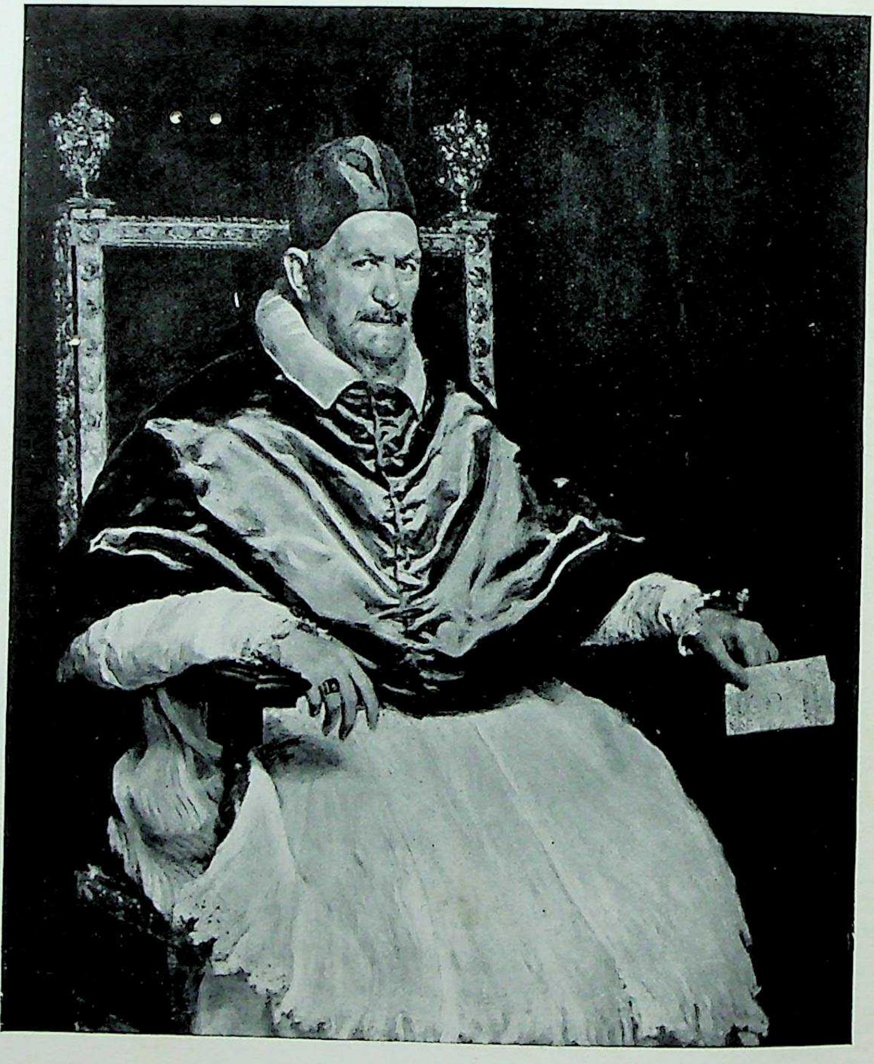
("LAS LANZAS")

SPANISH SCHOOL, 1599–1660 Prado, Madrid

WHEN Velazquez painted this great historical piece in 1639 he had scarcely passed his fortieth year. Fresh from his first experience of Italy, he was in the vein to make the most of the decorative and dramatic opportunity which was offered him. For the new Palace of Buen Retiro, the gift of the minister Olivares to Philip IV, was to be adorned with a series of great canvases depicting the triumphs of Spain, and this subject Velazquez appropriated for his own brush.

The treatment is less entirely original and individual here than in such later works as "Las Meninas." "It was," to quote R. A. M. Stevenson, "rather the purpose than the subject which modified the art of Velazquez, and made it akin to the work of the Venetians. The canvas was to serve as a decorative panel, a thing to be looked at as one looks at a piece of tapestry; hence doubtless its decorative flatness, its variety of colours, its blue foundation, its brown foreground and its block-like pattern of huge clumps of black and white and orange." Hence also the symmetry and balance of the composition. The victorious Spaniards on the right are more numerous than the Dutchmen who accompany the defeated Justin of Nassau, but these last are placed nearer the foreground, so that each individual figure bulks larger. Courtesy and nobility are expressed in the figure and gesture of Spinola, who is advancing to receive his vanquished foe. His great charger forms a dark mass in the foreground, and behind his bodyguard rises the parallel hedge of lances from which the picture is named. Across this sweeps the diagonal of the banner. These slender lances form an interesting contrast to the stouter halberds of the Dutchmen opposite The figure on the extreme right beside the horse is a portrait of the painter himself.

[*See p.* 39.



PORTRAIT OF POPE INNOCENT X
BY VELAZQUEZ

Doria Palace, Rome

PLATE 57

VELAZQUEZ

PORTRAIT OF POPE INNOCENT X

Spanish School, 1599–1660 Doria Palace, Rome

It was on the occasion of his second visit to Italy in 1650 that Velazquez was called upon to paint "the most ill-favoured among all the Successors of St. Peter." Rumour whispered that his ugliness nearly lost for Innocent x the papal chair. All the world as it passes through Rome streams into the little shrine in the Doria Palace where the Pope is enthroned in hierarchic state. The portrait is a study in reds. To quote Sir Walter Armstrong, "the Pope's head is very red in tone, his cap, of course, is red, and so is his biretta; he sits in a red chair, and the background is a red curtain. The only points of relief are the gold decorations of the chair, the Pope's white collar and surplice and the letter in his left hand. We cannot resist a feeling at first that all this red was put there to justify the Holy Father's complexion, and for a moment a sense of being before a *tour de force* produces a certain disappointment. But this soon vanishes as the head begins to tell, and we realize at last what a living page of history is hidden away in this retired corner of a Roman palazzo."

According to Morelli, "with the exception of a few of Rembrandt's finest likenesses, this painting surpasses all other portraits of that century. As Gainsborough has left us a "Blue Boy" and Paolo Veronese a "Green Man," so Velazquez in Pope Innocent has given us a red portrait."

[*See p.* 39.

PLATE 58

VELAZQUEZ

VENUS AND CUPID

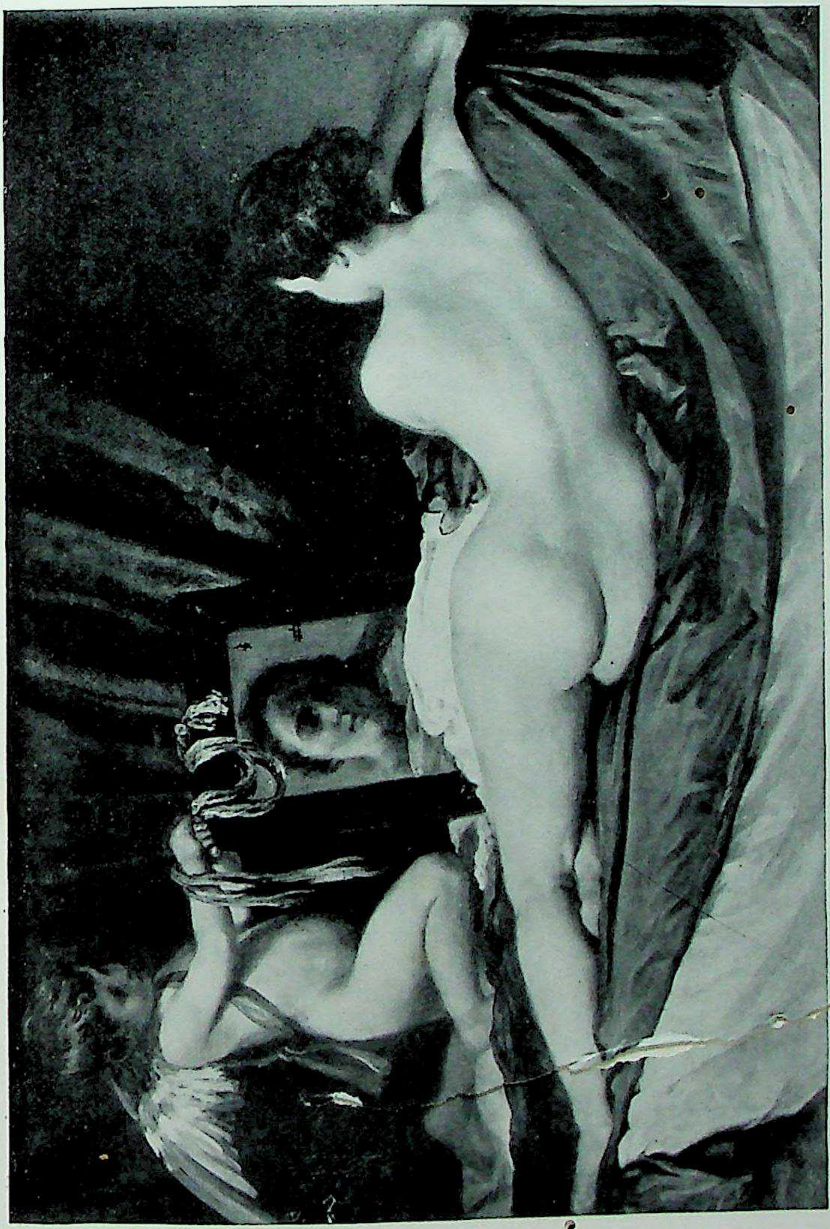
Spanish School, 1599–1660 National Gallery

A century and a half after Giorgione had painted his "Venus," Velazquez, pausing for a moment from the official portraits which constituted the bulk of his work, created this version of the Goddess of Love. The Venus of Velazquez is not the grandly idealized and spiritualized form clothed in natural majesty of the Venetian, but the finely realized figure of a beautifully developed woman in the heyday of her youthful vitality, her supple limbs suggesting that she may have been a dancer.

The bold contours of the figure are accentuated by the draperies on which the goddess lies, the lovely line of the back being defined by and repeated in the grey-black covering of the couch, this cold colour serving also to bring out the rosy tints of the dimpled flesh, while the springing curve of the left hip is echoed in the billowy white scarf which divides it from the mirror. Very lovely is the head with its rich chestnut-coloured hair swept off the brow and carelessly knotted behind. The averted face reflected but dimly from the mirror, leaves something for the imagination, but

> "Il faut laisser
> Dans les plus beaux sujets quelquechose à penser,"

and here the whole body speaks as eloquently as a headless Greek torso.



National Gallery

VENUS AND CUPID

BY VELAZQUEZ

In this picture, which stands rather by itself among the master's works, Velazquez makes use of more vivid colours than is his wont. The rich crimson of the curtain is the dominant note, and the chord of positive colour is completed by the blue of Cupid's wings and sash, the pinkish purple of the scarf he has thrown over the mirror-frame and the exquisite note of green in the gauze which lies in the curve of the hips.

The picture, which came from Rokeby Hall, was purchased in 1906 for £45,000, and presented to the nation by the National Art-Collections Fund.

[*See p.* 39.

PLATE 59

VELAZQUEZ

THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS

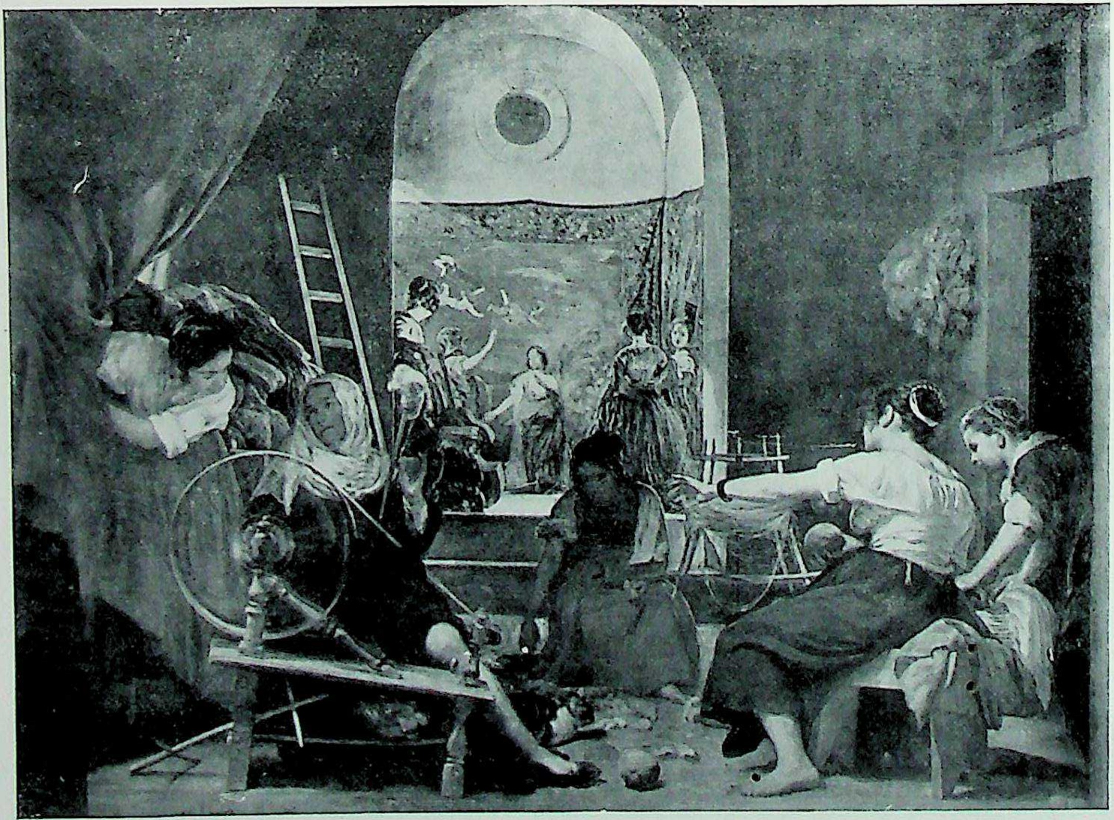
("LAS HILANDERAS")

SPANISH SCHOOL, 1599-1660 Prado, Madrid

THE scheme of composition in "Las Hilanderas" of a room within a room was one in which, in far simpler form and smaller dimensions, de Hoogh delighted. Velazquez, on one of his official visits to the Tapestry Factory, must have been struck with the pictorial possibilities of the scene he met, and with the directness he invariably brought to a portrait, he painted just what his eyes reported to him.

The lighting is that of the scene itself at the moment of painting, not the regulated lighting of the studio. In the twilight of the antechamber the workers are occupied in carding and spinning wool. All are in shadow, except the graceful woman on the right, on whose charming figure the light, falling from a window above the spectator, is concentrated. The inner room, which is raised like a stage above the workroom, is brilliantly illuminated by sunshine, striking diagonally across from the left, and enveloping both the figures of three lady visitors to the factory and the forms of the heroes woven into the tapestries they are inspecting, in something of confusion. But what puzzles the eye in this inner room becomes clearer as the spectator recedes still farther from the picture. The wonderful depth and space in this canvas are unrivalled outside Velazquez's own work. He has succeeded, by subtle and truthful gradations of tone, in modelling space itself, and surrounding every figure with its envelope of palpitating atmosphere.

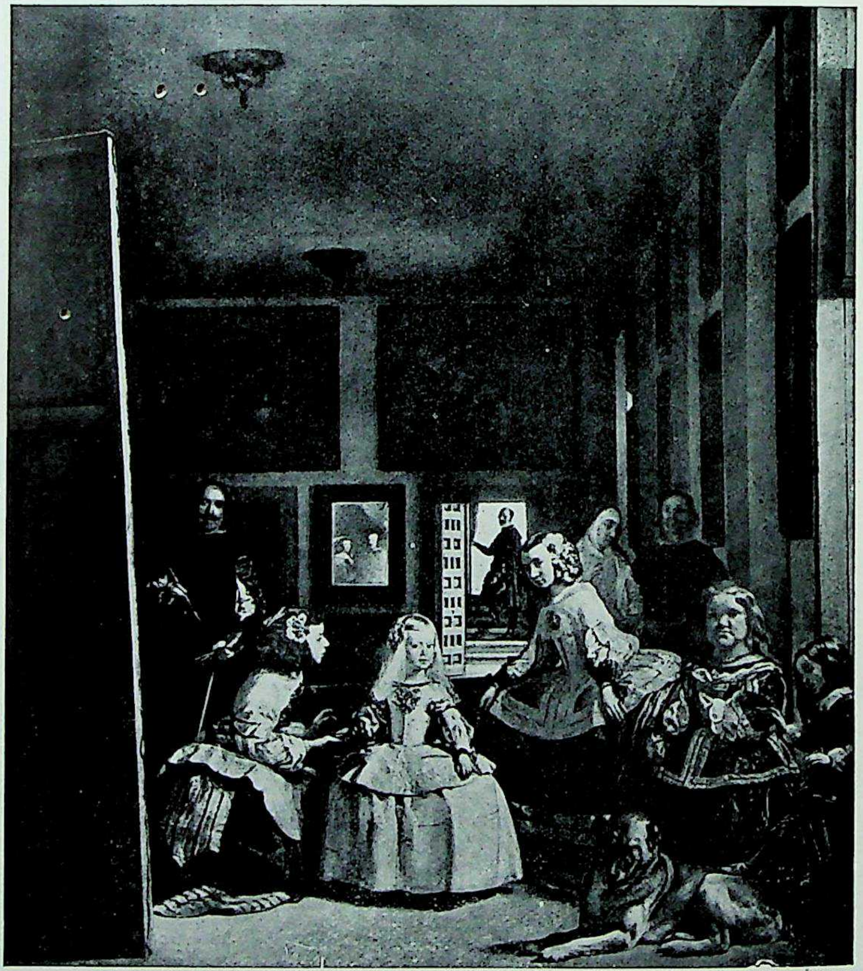
[*See p.* 39.



Prado

THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS

BY VELAZQUEZ



Prado

THE MAIDS OF HONOUR

BY VALEZQUEZ

PLATE 60

VELAZQUEZ

THE MAIDS OF HONOUR

("LAS MENINAS")

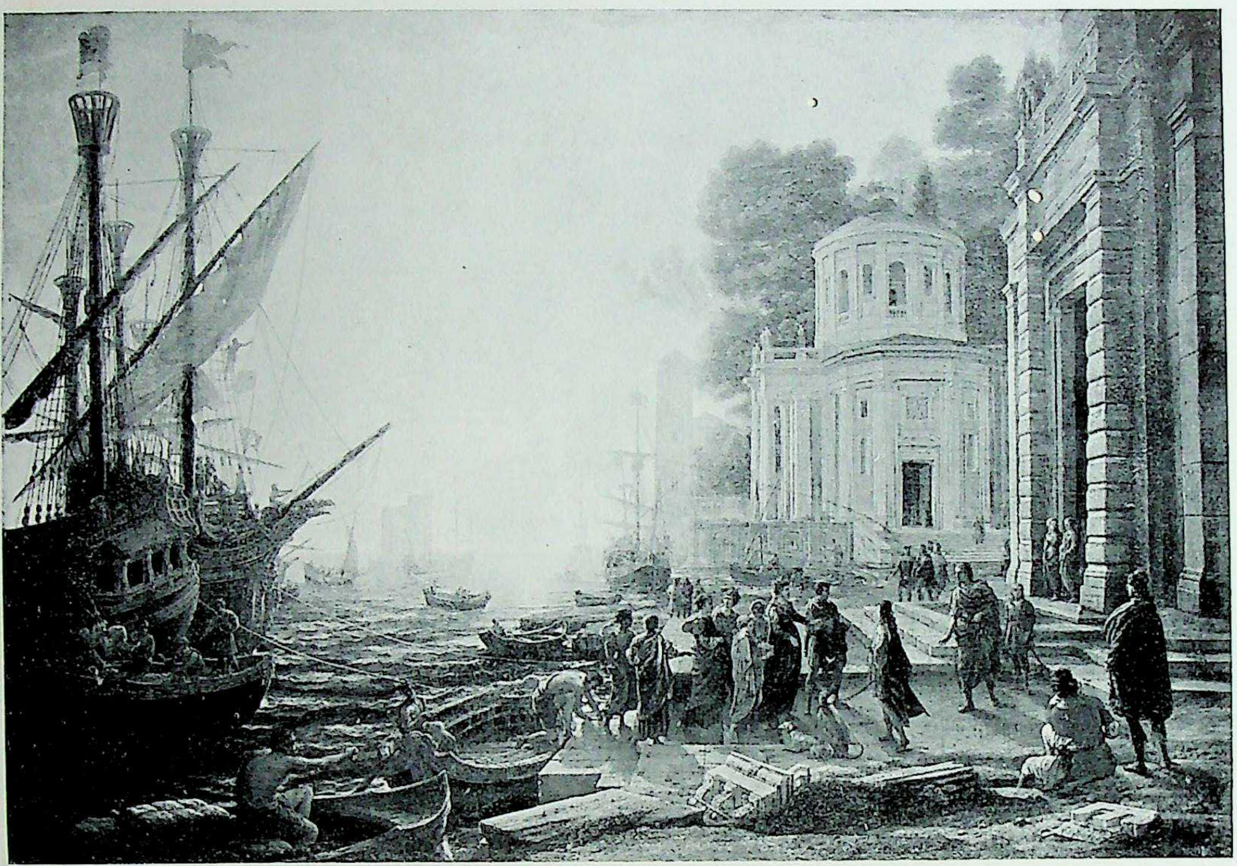
SPANISH SCHOOL, 1599-1660 Prado, Madrid

IN "Las Meninas," though the chief actress is a royal Princess and the King and Queen are present, the true interest of the subject is the same as that of "Las Hilanderas," the treatment of an interior, be it palace or factory, and the setting in it of the figures that belong to it. So spacious is this setting, that the eye is actually carried to the ceiling of the lofty room, and its depth is emphasized by the light-reflecting mirror and open door at the farther end through which pours a flood of sunshine. Here again it is that modelled space which makes the wonder of the picture, and shocks the eye with an impression of such reality that the room and all in it seem actually to live. As Gautier wrote, "So complete is the illusion, that, standing in front of 'Las Meninas,' one is tempted to ask, 'Where is the picture?'"

The centre of attraction is the little Princess Margarita, who, evidently extremely refractory over this tiresome business of portrait-painting, is being cajoled by her maids of honour, or entertained by two hideous court dwarfs, one of whom is playing with a dog. Immediately behind them are seen a gentleman and lady of the court, and in the open doorway appears the figure of another official. The age of the Princess, who cannot be more than five or six, determines 1656–7 as the date of the picture.

The artist, standing before the great canvas on which he is painting this very picture, must be looking at his models in a mirror at the spectator's end of the room. The King and Queen, who must be standing where the spectator is placed, watching their daughter, appear reflected in the mirror at the end of the room behind the Princess. Thus the picture is curiously involved, yet perfect in unity.

[*See p.* 39.



Louvre

CLEOPATRA LANDING AT TARSUS

BY CLAUDE

PLATE 61

CLAUDE LORRAINE

CLEOPATRA LANDING AT TARSUS

FRENCH SCHOOL, 1600–1682 Louvre

THIS seaport, a comparatively early work, is perhaps one of Claude's finest efforts, in that it is in almost perfect condition, a somewhat rare quality with the master, whose pigments have often proved fugitive or at least treacherous.

Tarsus, indeed, never stood like this. The painter has created a dream-city, palaced to the water's edge, and glowing in the shimmering mists of the rising sun. The title is make-believe too; the group with Cleopatra and her train advancing from the water's edge to meet Mark Antony, unconvincing, scarcely royal. The classical temples that delighted the Roman cardinals and princes of his day for whom he painted, wear an air of artificiality to us. It is when we view the scene as a whole that the real greatness of the artist becomes apparent. The upstanding marble masses are finely balanced by the tall masts and yards of Cleopatra's galleys, while between them stretches away in exquisitely graduated values an infinite lane of light, trembling and quivering on the rippled surface of the sea, deep blue, then azure, then opalescent under the gleaming sky. Surely in this great painter's vision the beauty of nature at least is not invented, only revealed. Can we then wonder that Constable, the realist of English landscape, used to stand spellbound before the work of the great Franco-Italian idealist?

[*See p.* 40.

PLATE 62

PETER PAUL RUBENS

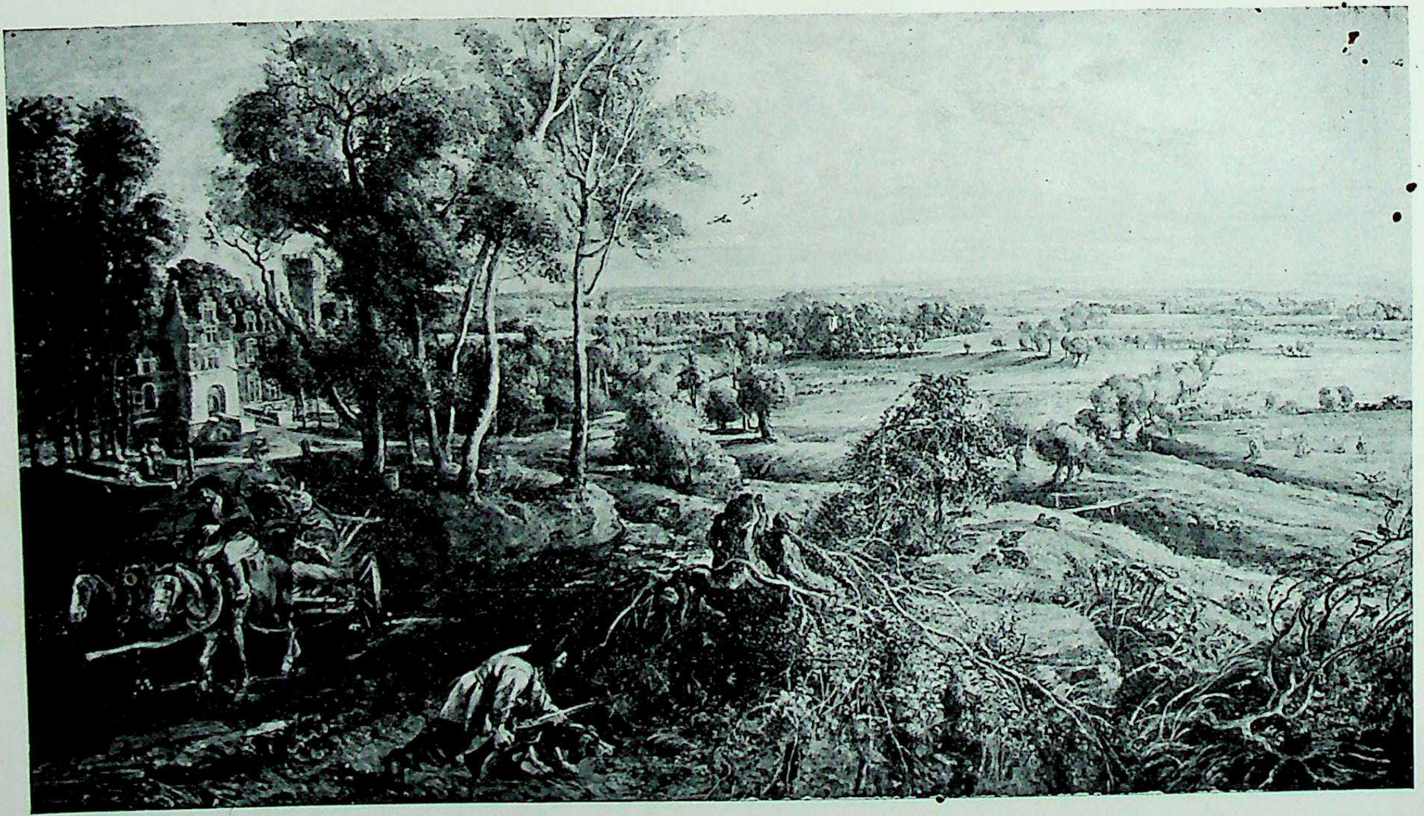
AUTUMN
OR
THE CHÂTEAU DE STEIN

FLEMISH SCHOOL, 1577–1640 National Gallery

IT was only late in life that Rubens took to painting landscapes, as a kind of holiday diversion, when, having been obliged to retire from politics, he bought the picturesque mediæval Château de Stein, and settled down to the congenial life of a rich country gentleman on his own broad acres.

The wide sweep of rolling country, unbroken from the brushwood at your feet to the meeting of distant earth and sky, fertile, cultivated, is treated with magnificent breadth of vision and with a melting touch. The level champaign, illumined with the first gleams of the rising sun, stretches for untold miles across the few feet of panel. Under the long shadows of the trees twilight still lingers, but their tops are rimmed with gold. How happy is the contrast here between the warm rich browns and scarlet of the foreground, and the cool, delicate grey-greens and blues of the distance, where the horizon, obscured by a misty haze, merges into the spacious sky!

The figures which animate Rubens's landscapes are no mere puppets, but belong to the earth, and as Reynolds said, "do their business with great energy." The old-time



National Gallery

AUTUMN, OR THE CHÂTEAU DE STEIN

BY RUBENS

gamekeeper, crouching with his dog beneath some brambles, watches a covey of partridges; the peasant rumbles off to market in his ramshackle cart, his wife behind lending a grateful splash of warm scarlet to the dark side of the picture. And farther back, on the left, the painter and his family have strolled out of their castle, half hidden in the trees, to enjoy the early freshness of the morning.

[*See p.* 41.

PLATE 63

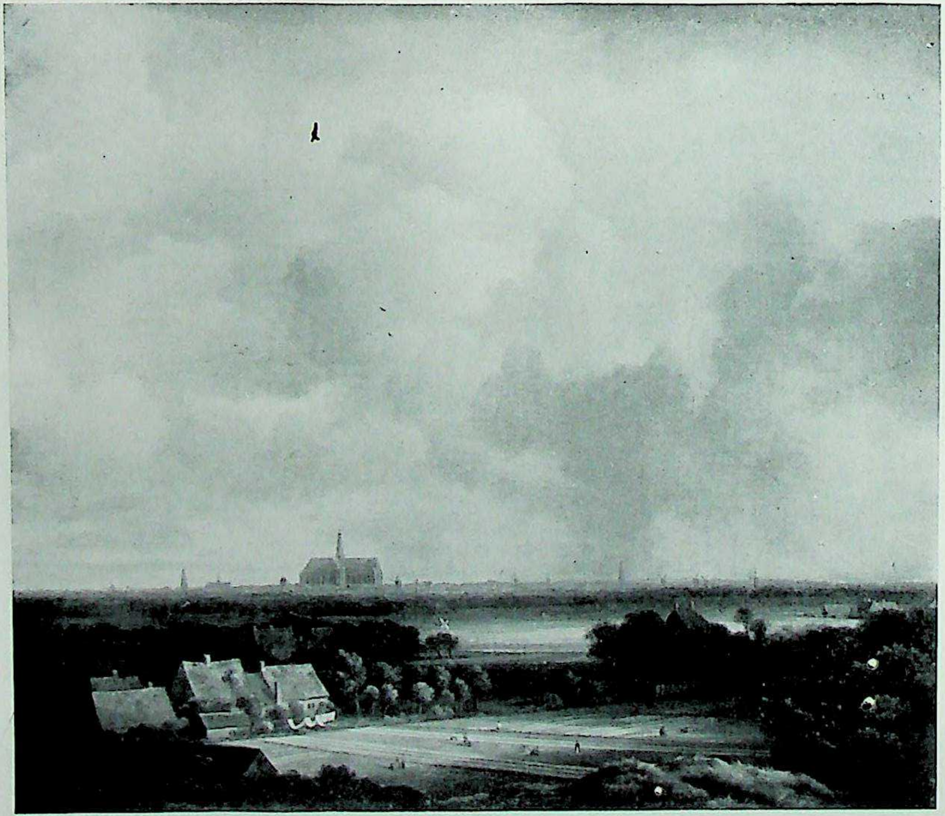
JACOB VAN RUISDAEL

VIEW OF HAARLEM

DUTCH SCHOOL *Circa* 1628–1682	The Hague

To obtain this bird's-eye view of the great plain over which the sea once rolled, the artist has sought the vantage ground of the neighbouring sand-dunes, where, raised above the low-lying land, he could survey sky and country stretched out before him. In front lies the closely mown grass meadow, on which long strips of linen are spread to bleach in the open air, and across the bare, solitary expanse beyond, the eye wanders to the long, level horizon, where, illumined by primrose gleams of pale sunshine, the town of Haarlem, with its red roofs, its ghost-like towers and windmills and, dominating all, the imposing mass of its great church of St. Bavon, a landmark for miles around, is profiled against the sky. The plain lies wrapped in gloomy sadness, save for the brilliantly lighted field in the middle distance and the bleaching-ground with its picturesque group of cottages in the foreground. Two-thirds of the panel are given up to the angry sky, from which great, rolling rain-clouds, in fine perspective, fling their heavy shadows over the plain.

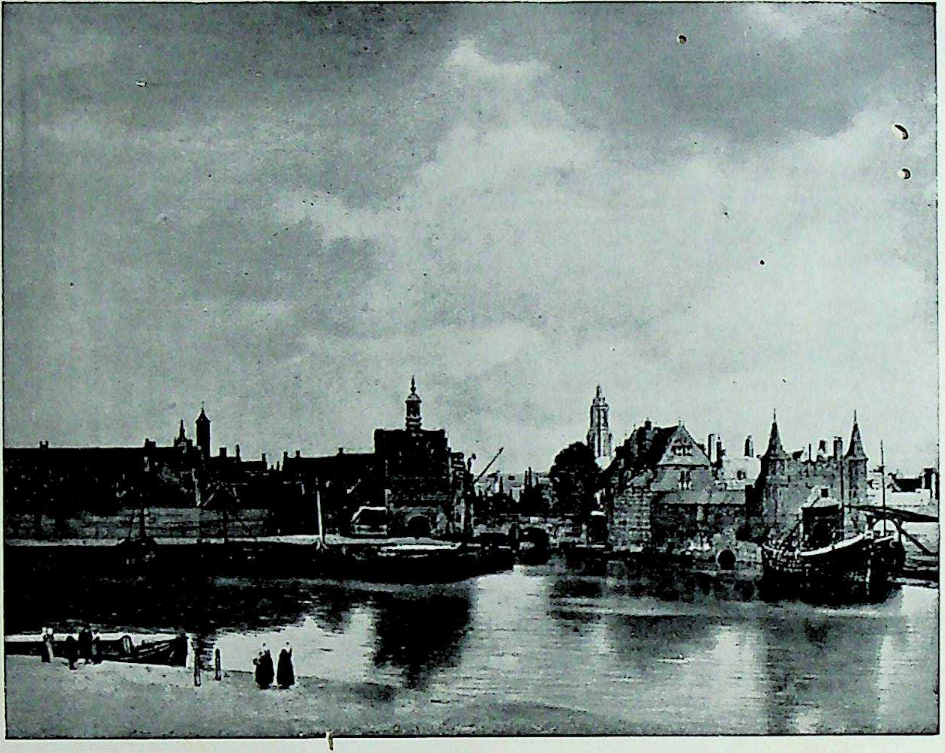
[*See p.* 41.



The Hague

VIEW OF HAARLEM

BY JACOB VAN RUISDAEL



The Hague

VIEW OF DELFT

BY VERMEER

PLATE 64

JAN VERMEER OF DELFT

VIEW OF DELFT

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1632–1675 The Hague

OF all the pictures in the world, it has been said, it is this which produces the most vivid impression with the simplest means. Here is perfect truth expressed in terms of perfect art—"the magic of diorama," as Théophile Gautier phrased it, "without sacrifice."

Vermeer has painted his native town in profile from the farther side of the Rotterdam Canal, the Schiedam and Rotterdam gates, united by a single-arched bridge, standing out conspicuously in the line of low buildings. There is infinite charm in this unique trilogy of sky, water and architecture, quivering and scintillating in a flood of light. The full rich colour harmonies of the quaint old buildings and the boats, the transparencies of hovering clouds and glittering water, the welcome contrasts of red brick and green trees,—all contribute to the fascination of this great picture.

The painting is strong and sure, the colour laid on solidly and with extraordinary decision. Here it would seem as though Vermeer were challenging Albert Cuyp as a painter of sunlight, just as in his interiors it is de Hoogh whom he seeks to rival. Were the picture to hang in a collection of choice modern Dutch landscapes, it would stand out from among them, not as an old master, but as modern, fresh and brilliant as themselves, though far surpassing them in its consummate artistry. Yet it is, so far as we know, his only venture into the domain of landscape. It is a signed work, and a sketch for it is preserved in the Staedel Museum in Frankfort.

[*See p.* 42.

PLATE 65

WILLIAM VAN DE VELDE THE YOUNGER

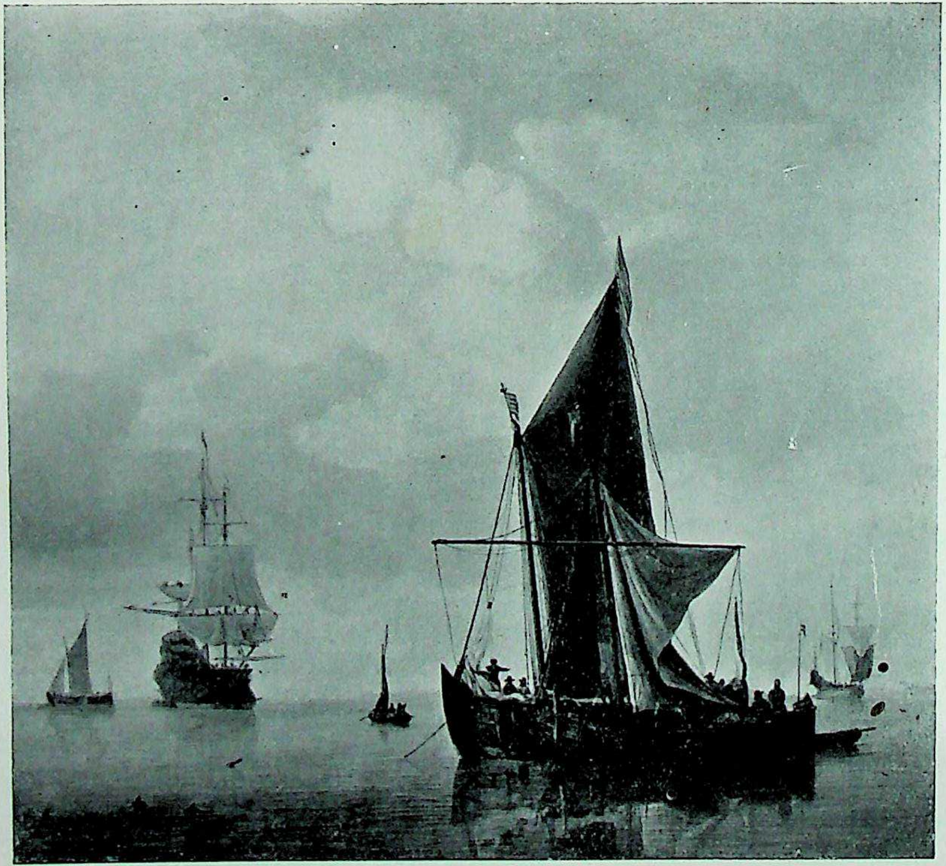
MARINE

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1633-1707 Pinakothek, Munich

THE two van de Veldes, father and son, were among the many foreign painters who settled, for a time at least, in England, to supply the deficiencies of our native art. The younger William excelled above all in his rendering of the sea at rest, as in this characteristic panel measuring only a few square inches. The glassy surface of the water, mirroring clouds and boats, the vast expanse of sky, as delicate in tone as the sea into which it melts, the splendid forms of the frigate and fishing-boats, their hulls and sails silhouetted magnificently against the horizon—all combine towards an imperishable impression of calm and tranquil beauty. It is indeed hard to say whether the painter succeeded more perfectly in rendering sky or sea, and many of his marines might be as accurately described as sky-scapes. The brown boats and sunlit yellow clouds form an effective contrast to the silvery harmony of the misty morning light.

The technique is exquisite, alike in its enamel-like surface, built up of thin transparent glazes, and in the delicate lines of the rigging, which the painter has touched in with miraculous fineness and certainty.

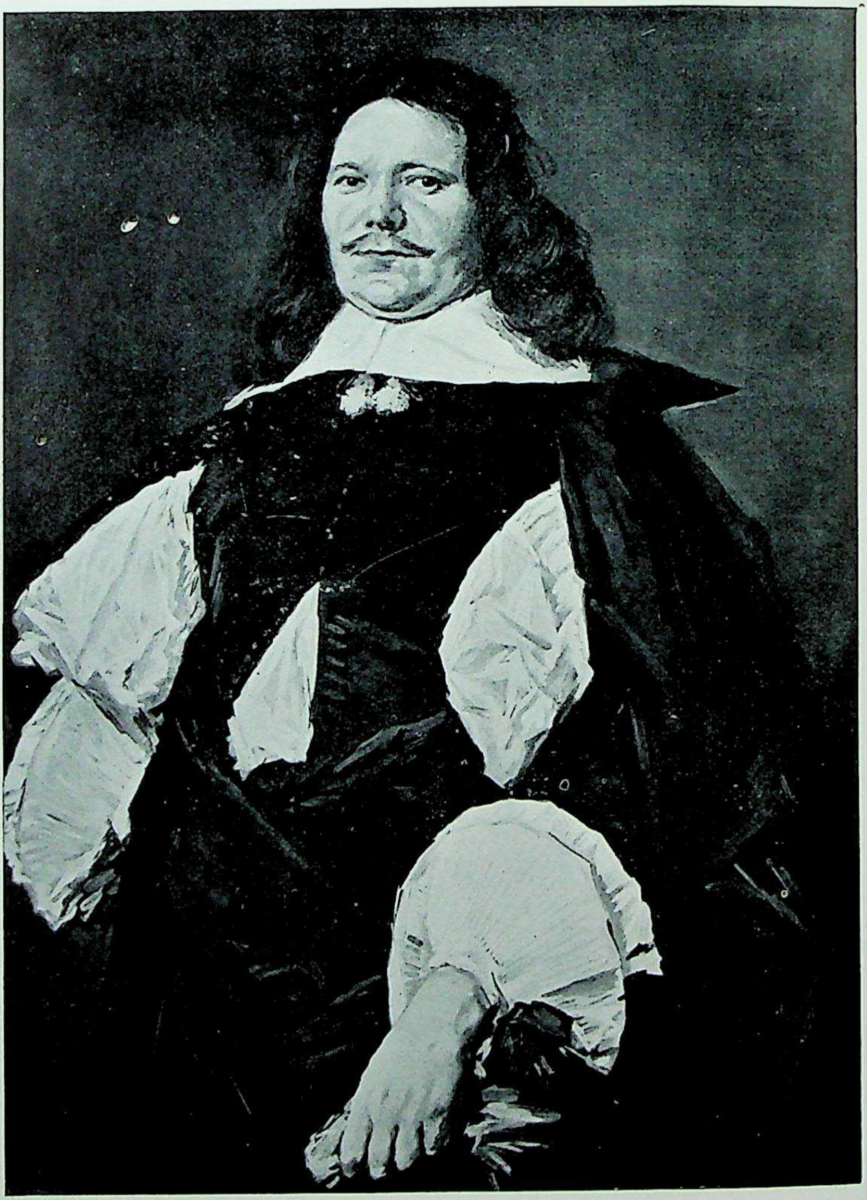
[*See p.* 42.



Munich

MARINE

BY WILLIAM VAN DE VELDE



Earl Spencer

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

BY FRANS HALS

PLATE 66

FRANS HALS

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

Dutch School *Circa* 1580–1666	Collection of Earl Spencer

THIS portrait of an unknown man of portly presence and genial expression passed until lately as a presentment of the Dutch national hero, Admiral de Ruyter, though there is no foundation for this presumption.

The figure, seen rather from below, bulks imposingly within its frame, holding its own with a certain lofty dignity which the bold treatment of the dress seems to emphasize. The vibrating black of the cloak, the brilliant white of the shirt and ruffs, the yellow gloves, the greenish-brown background and the ruddy flesh tints comprise the simple colour elements of this effective portrait, in which the peculiar pallor of the hand is rather unexpected. The picture is painted with tremendous force and directness, and the free brush-work can be appreciated even in a reproduction. For indeed Hals, as a virtuoso of the brush, stands second only to Velazquez. In broad, sweeping style he builds up his picture, modelling by the actual pattern of the brush-strokes.

[*See p.* 43.

PLATE 67

FRANS HALS

OFFICERS OF THE HAARLEM GUILD OF ARCHERS

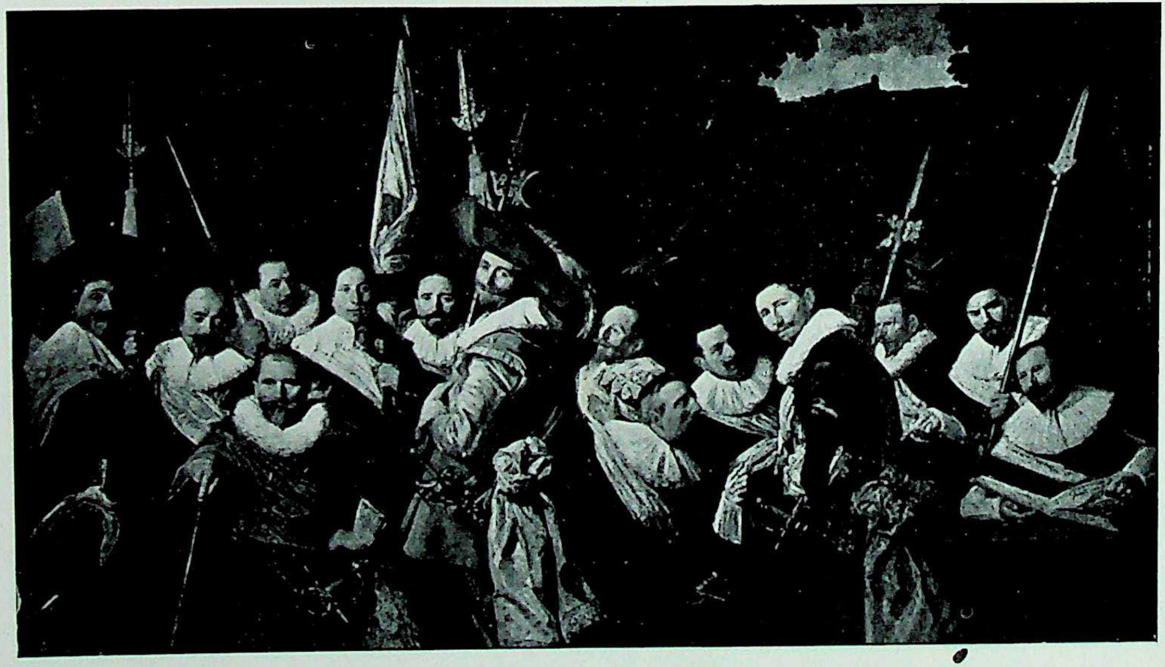
DUTCH SCHOOL
Circa 1580–1666

Municipal Gallery, Haarlem

WHICH among the great series of Regent pictures in the Haarlem Gallery, dating from 1616 to 1664, is the painter's masterpiece will be a matter of dispute as long as there are critics to debate it. Every phase of the artist's development may be studied in this stupendous row of portrait-groups. In this piece, the fourth of the series, dating from 1633, Hals has achieved a magnificent freedom both of colour and handling, with at the same time greater subordination of the unessential.

The setting is an out-of-door one, with a dark background of trees and houses against which the figures are splendidly ranged in full light. The central personage, in buff coat and pale blue sash and feathers, dominates the scene. On his left sits the Colonel, gorgeous in his broad orange sash, which is repeated in the figure seated on the table. The extraordinarily vigorous painting is full of life and striking bravura passages, the hands especially being dashed in with a few broad sweeps of the brush. For all that it is a portrait-group, in which the artist had to give importance and likeness to every head, it is at the same time a picture complete in itself, not a mere aggregation of parts.

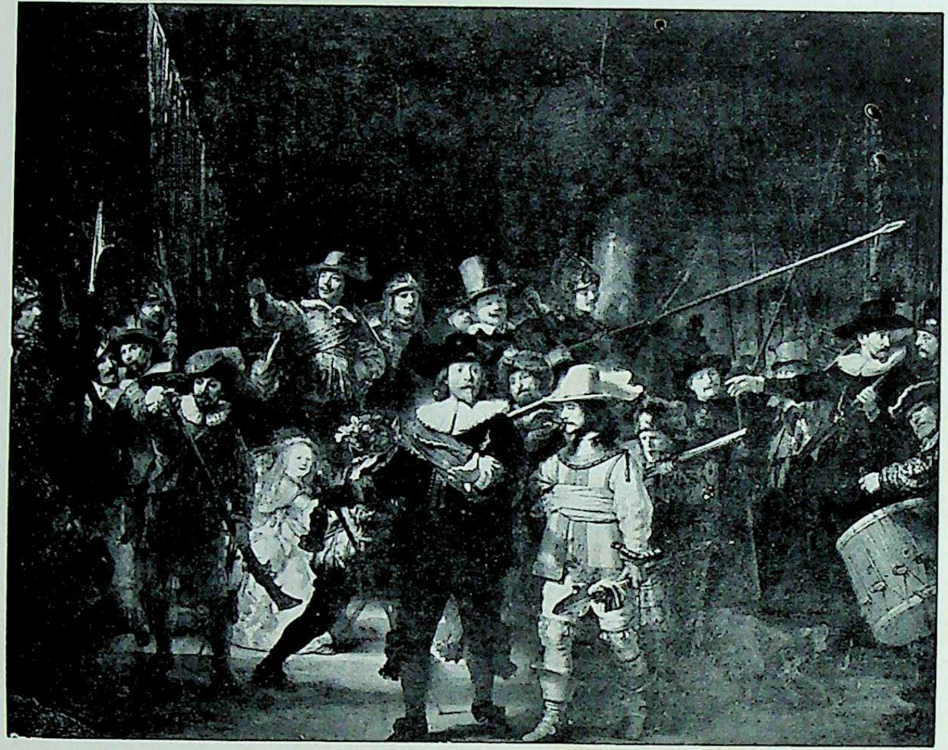
[*See p.* 43.



Municipal Gallery, Haarlem

OFFICERS OF THE HAARLEM GUILD OF ARCHERS

BY FRANS HALS



Amsterdam

THE NIGHT-WATCH

BY REMBRANDT

PLATE 68

REMBRANDT

THE NIGHT-WATCH

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1606–1669 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

THE title of this picture is a misnomer. Since its recent cleaning and restoration it proves to be not a night-watch at all, not even a picture of a night scene. The subject represents in dramatic fashion a march-out, perhaps a call to arms, of the Civic Guard, with Captain Banning Cocq, through whom Rembrandt obtained the commission, at its head. In the full light of day, in golden sunshine, Captain Cocq gives his orders to his lieutenant, the drummer sounds the alarm and the standard-bearer unfurls the flag. Every member of the company has caught up the arms nearest to hand. A crowd of children assemble, as is their way.

The picture has been ruthlessly cut down, as may be seen from the small contemporary copy in the National Gallery, some of the figures being awkwardly mutilated. The composition is broken into unpleasing halves by the captain's figure, and is further crowded to excess, devoid of a true pictorial centre and inclined to confusion in design, perhaps because Rembrandt made no preliminary sketch. The contrasts of light and shade, it has been pointed out, are somewhat too violent, and tend to break up the composition into unmanageable groups. The tonality must have been deep and rich from the first, ambers, russets, fawns and golden browns predominating.

The result failed to please the Philistines of the Civic Guard. The artist had produced a splendid picture instead of the series of pedestrian portraits for which they had bargained and paid. Rembrandt, like a true genius, was again in advance of his time.

[*See p.* 43.

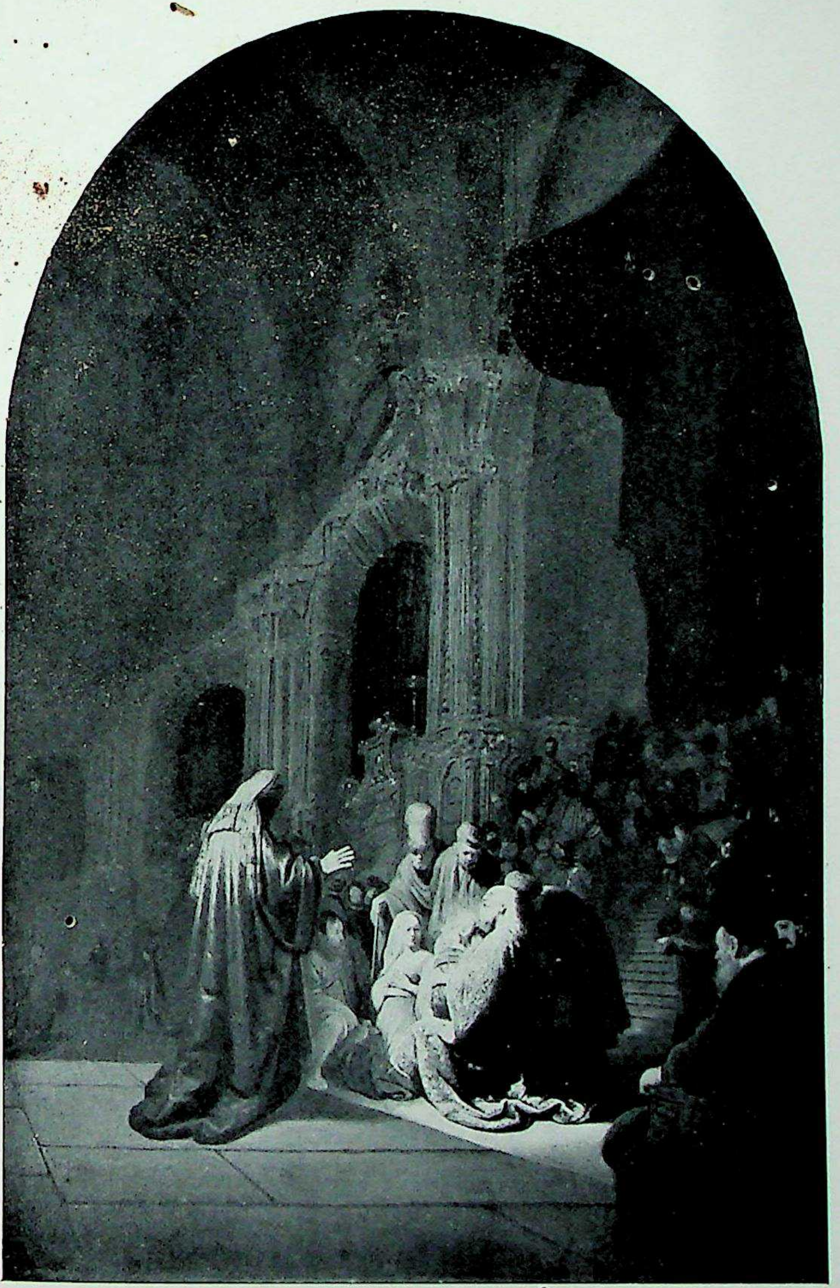
PLATE 69

REMBRANDT

PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1606–1669 The Hague

REMBRANDT was but twenty-five when he produced this picture, the familiar scene in which the Christ-child, brought by His parents to the Temple, is taken into the arms of the aged Simeon, who gives vent to the heart-cry of his old age, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." The picture, signed and dated 1631, is in perfect preservation, the minute execution having all the jewel-like close fineness of touch peculiar to the works of Rembrandt's early period. Already he had discovered the mysterious dramatic powers of light and shade. The great gloomy church has swallowed up in its vast heights every ray of light save those which fall in brilliant concentration on the central group, or lightly touch the pillars and sacred vessels in the background. The luminous shadows, full of atmosphere, play about an intricate patterning of pillars, arches, and stairs in subtle and varied gradations. The high-lights reveal a miracle of delicate colouring, from the long purple robe of the priest, who stands with hand outstretched over the group, to the exquisite azure of the Virgin's dress and the gorgeous golden tones of Simeon's mantle. The composition has been unjustly criticized for its repeated use of the high pyramidal forms, for nowhere do these intrude upon the eye, while the empty space on the left, dominated by the priest's figure, finely balances



The Hague

PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

BY REMBRANDT

the crowd of hushed worshippers half surrounding the central group. In the features of one of the old men seated in the foreground those of Rembrandt's father may be recognized, while the Virgin is a portrait of the painter's sister. In spite of the small size of the picture, as many as forty-two figures can be distinguished among the crowd of people ascending and descending the great stairway. The arched top of the panel is a later addition now hidden by the frame.

[*See p.* 43.

PLATE 70

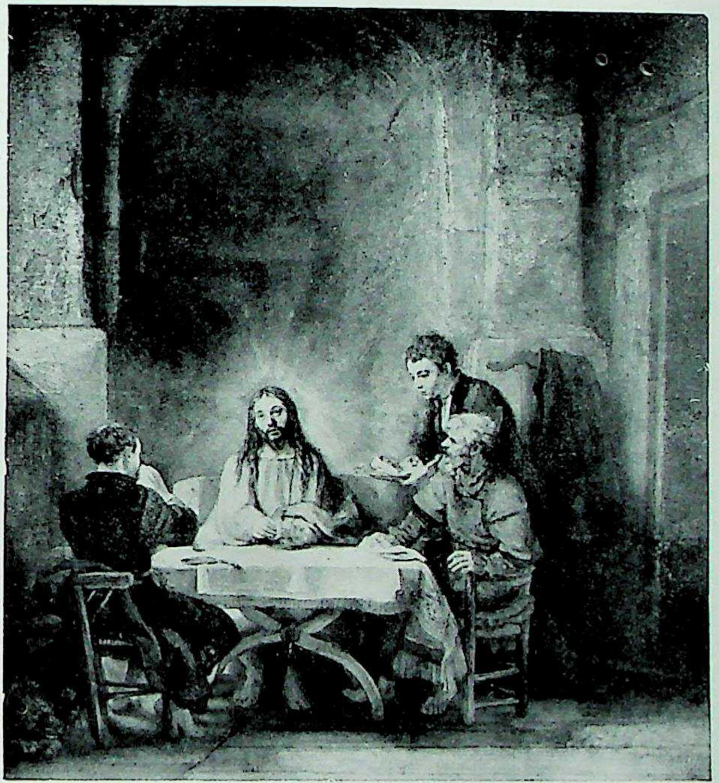
REMBRANDT

CHRIST AT EMMAUS

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1606–1669 Louvre

IN no other canvas of this period—the picture is signed and dated 1648—do we find such simple directness, so powerful an appeal to the emotions, as in this strangely unconventional and intimate little scene. There is no touch of elaboration in the composition, no attempt to express the miraculous. In their quiet dignity the figures tell the story by attitude and expression. There is reverence in every touch. The white-robed central figure of the risen Christ, enveloped in a radiance of His own against the deep embrasure of the wall, suggests, as He breaks bread once again with His disciples, something of the pathos and mystery of death, in marked contrast to the intensely living personalities about Him. There is an unearthly expression in the eyes and on the parted lips which no reproduction can adequately render. The two disciples carry us back to earth again; here belief and adoration on the one side are finely contrasted against criticism and awakened wonder on the other, while the expression of the servant is one of boorish unconsciousness. The technique is broad but smooth; the colour-scheme of soft brown relieved by touches of red. Unfortunately no reproduction can do justice to the marvellous golden glow suffusing the scene.

[*See p.* 44.

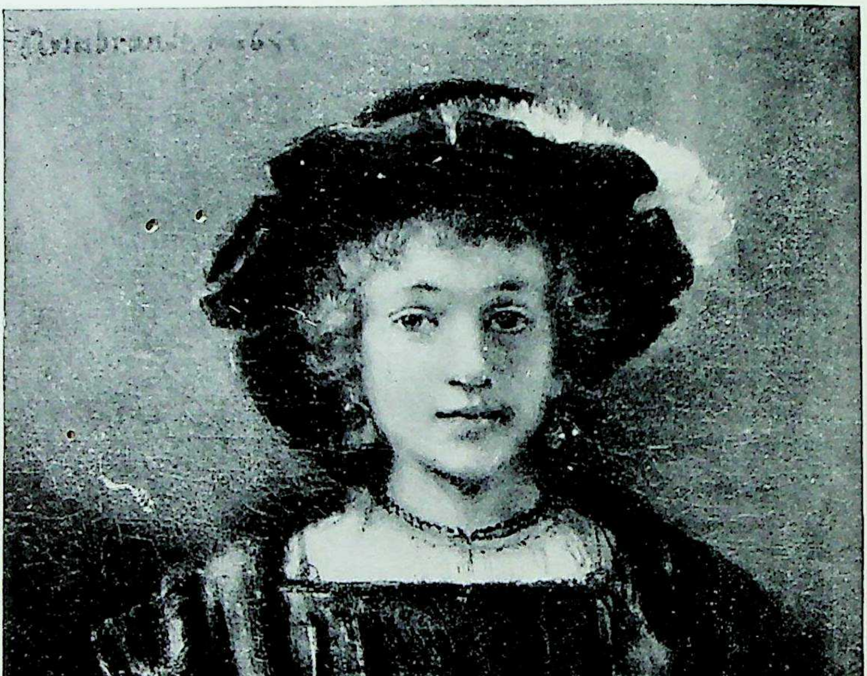


Louvre

CHRIST AT EMMAUS

BY REMBRANDT

PLATE LXXI



New York

PORTRAIT OF HIS SON TITUS

BY REMBRANDT

PLATE 71

REMBRANDT

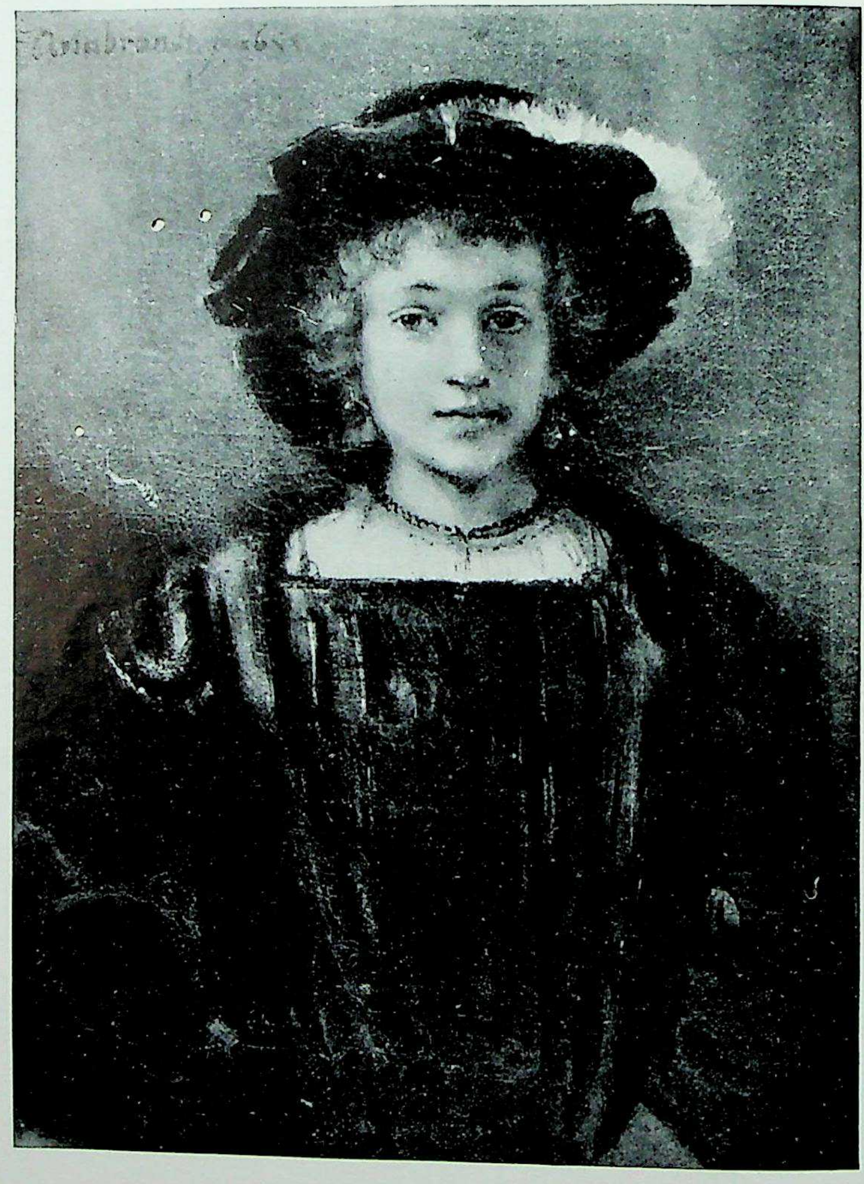
PORTRAIT OF HIS SON TITUS

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1606–1669 Henry E. Huntington Library & Art Gallery, Pasadena

REMBRANDT has produced one of the masterpieces of his maturity in this romantic conception of his only son Titus. As we see him here at the age of fourteen—for the portrait is signed and dated 1655—many of the charms of his dead mother can be recognized in this sweet face that looks out at us from a kind of aureole formed by the curly brown hair and black velvet hat. It would seem that the desolate man had poured all his aching love into this task of delineating the features of his lost Saskia's child. His first-born had died a mere infant. This Titus, inheritor of the mother's weakness, was to grow to manhood only to slip out of life before his father's eyes.

Nowhere in Rembrandt's work do we find a richer colour-harmony of warm browns and dull red relieved by slight touches of scarlet in face and dress and the mellow white of the lace-trimmed shirt. A bright, winning boy, he is attired in all the bravery, plumed hat, pearl ear-rings and doublet, the fancy dress, no doubt, with which the father loved to deck his son before handing him down to the approval of posterity.

[*See p.* 44.



PORTRAIT OF HIS SON TITUS

BY REMBRANDT

New York

PLATE 71

REMBRANDT

PORTRAIT OF HIS SON TITUS

Dutch School, 1606–1669 Henry E. Huntington Library &
Art Gallery, Pasadena

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[*See p.* 44.

PLATE 72

(FRONTISPIECE)

JAN VERMEER OF DELFT

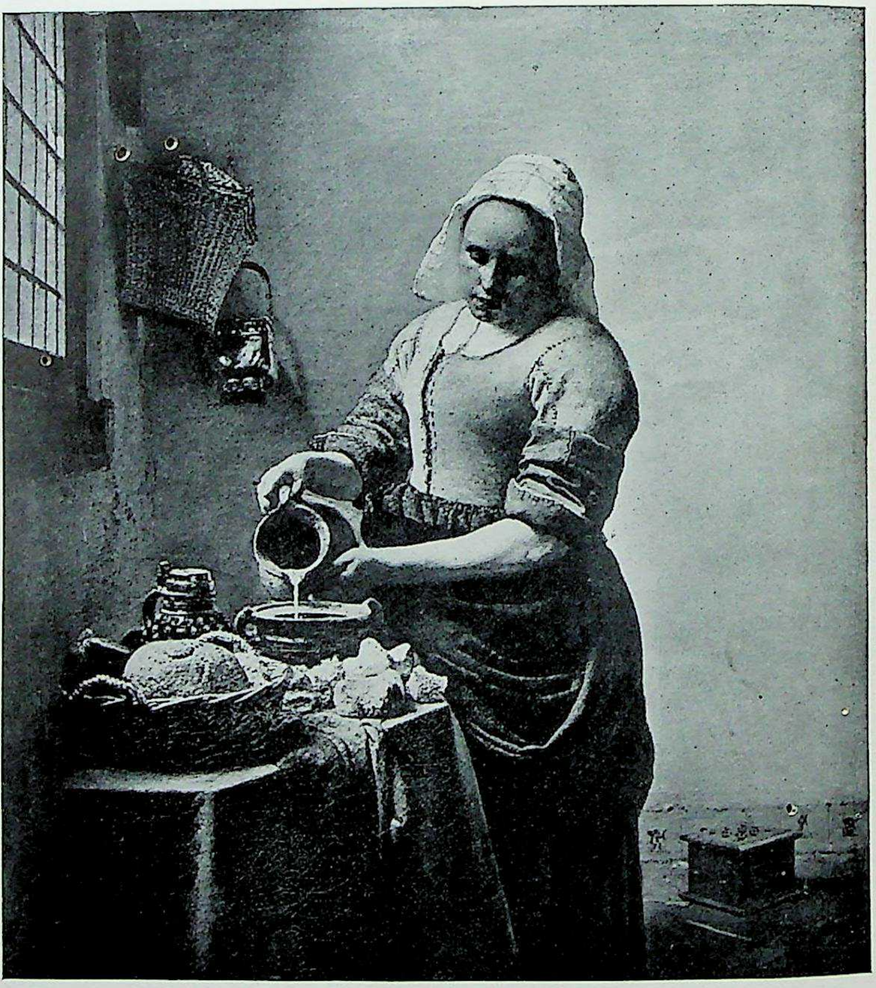
SOLDIER AND LAUGHING GIRL

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1632–1675 New York

A PICTURE which, according to one of the most distinguished modern critics, could hardly be kept out of a collection of the world's masterpieces, needs but little comment. Painted probably about 1656, it once masqueraded gaily under the forged signature of Pieter de Hoogh. Here consummate mastery of treatment is allied to telling boldness of design. The artist has sat quite close to his subject, hence the great dark mass of the soldier's figure looms superbly in the foreground, in fine contrast to the brightly illuminated face of the laughing girl. This, in its turn, is relieved against the in-pouring light, bathing wall and map behind her. The design of the hat and the contour of the man's arm are effectively set off against the formal rectangles of the lattice and open window and the frame of the map. This map and the handsome lion-backed chairs, favourite studio properties of the artist, add dignity to the simple interior, from which everything unessential has been banished.

The colouring is as wonderful as the composition. Against the lovely grey-blue tones of wall and map the man's deep red coat and the cool tints of the tablecloth, the glass and the woman's dress are harmonized. The vibrant colour of the tablecloth, indeed, is produced by the artifice of juxtaposing spots of yellow and green, an early example of pointillism.

[*See p.* 44.



Amsterdam

THE MILKMAID

BY VERMEER

PLATE 73

JAN VERMEER OF DELFT

THE MILKMAID

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1632–1675 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

A SERVING maid pouring milk into a bowl—how bald the description reads, and yet how marvellous the artist's achievement! As always with Vermeer, it is the combination of sunlit space and distinguished colouring that makes the glory of his pictures. The background is the cool grey wall lighted by a stream of sunshine from the window, against which the colour elements of the composition, the lemon-yellow bodice and green sleeves, the blue apron and red skirt, the green tablecloth, the brown and blue earthenware vessels and the still-life on the table, are set down and combined with Vermeer's characteristic felicity. On the floor against a border of Dutch tiles may be seen the inevitable charcoal brazier found in the Dutch home of to-day as of Vermeer's time. The picture probably dates from the artist's earlier period, but the exact chronology of Vermeer's works is not easy to determine. It must surely have been with some such picture in his mind that Walter Pater wrote: "The pictorial gift, that inventive or creative handling of pure line and colour which is almost always in Dutch painting as also in the works of Titian and Veronese, is quite independent of everything definitely poetical in the subject it accompanies."

[*See p.* 44.

PLATE 74

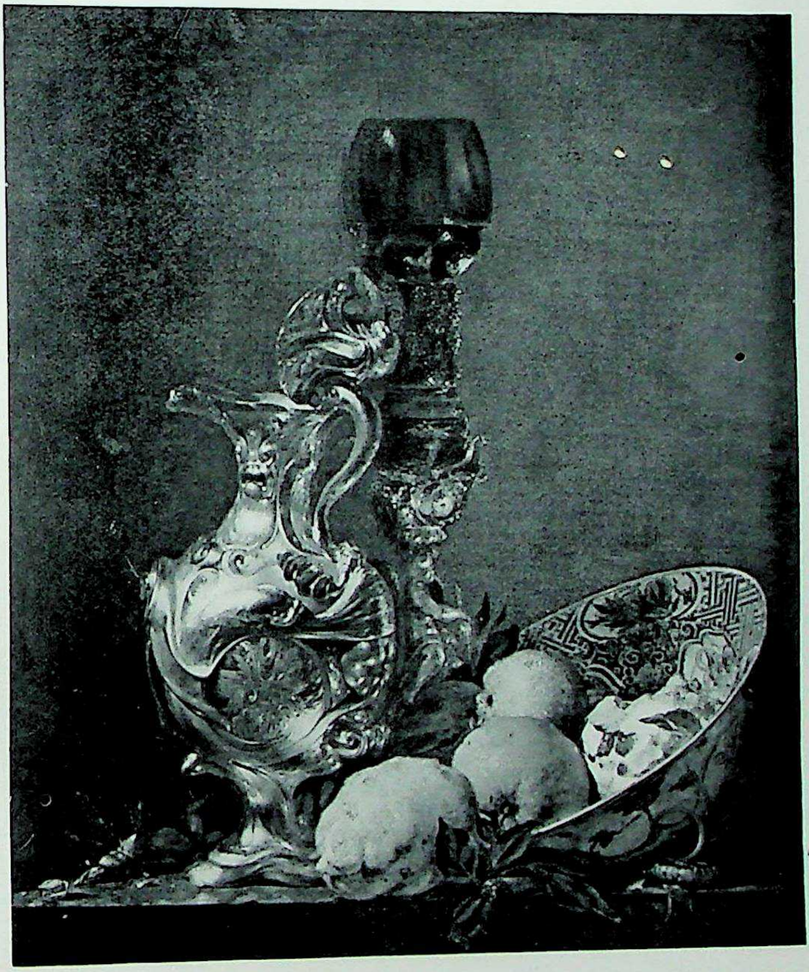
WILLIAM KALF

STILL-LIFE

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1622-1693 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

AMONG the many Dutch and Flemish painters of the seventeenth century who devoted themselves to the painting of still-life, de Heem, van Beyeren, Heda and a host of lesser lights, Kalf was perhaps the most distinguished, if not the most prolific. Though some of them, perhaps, showed themselves his equals in technique, Kalf was without doubt the greatest artist in that he preferred to rely more upon the tasteful arrangement of a few well-chosen objects than upon that elaborate profusion in which such a painter as de Heem took pleasure. Here a finely chased silver jug in the style of Viano's masterpieces, a tall wine-glass, a choice piece of Chinese porcelain and a few oranges are all his material. But both in colour and composition the effect is far finer than in many a more ambitious piece. The smooth textures of metal, glass, and porcelain and the rougher surface of the fruit are rendered with masterly exactness and sympathetic touch, giving to each its proper value and allowing each to contribute its characteristic effect towards the building up of the picture. The colour is deep and transparent in general, though in places heavily loaded. For all the careful forethought with which every object has been grouped, the composition gives a pleasant impression of easy balance and unstudied repose.

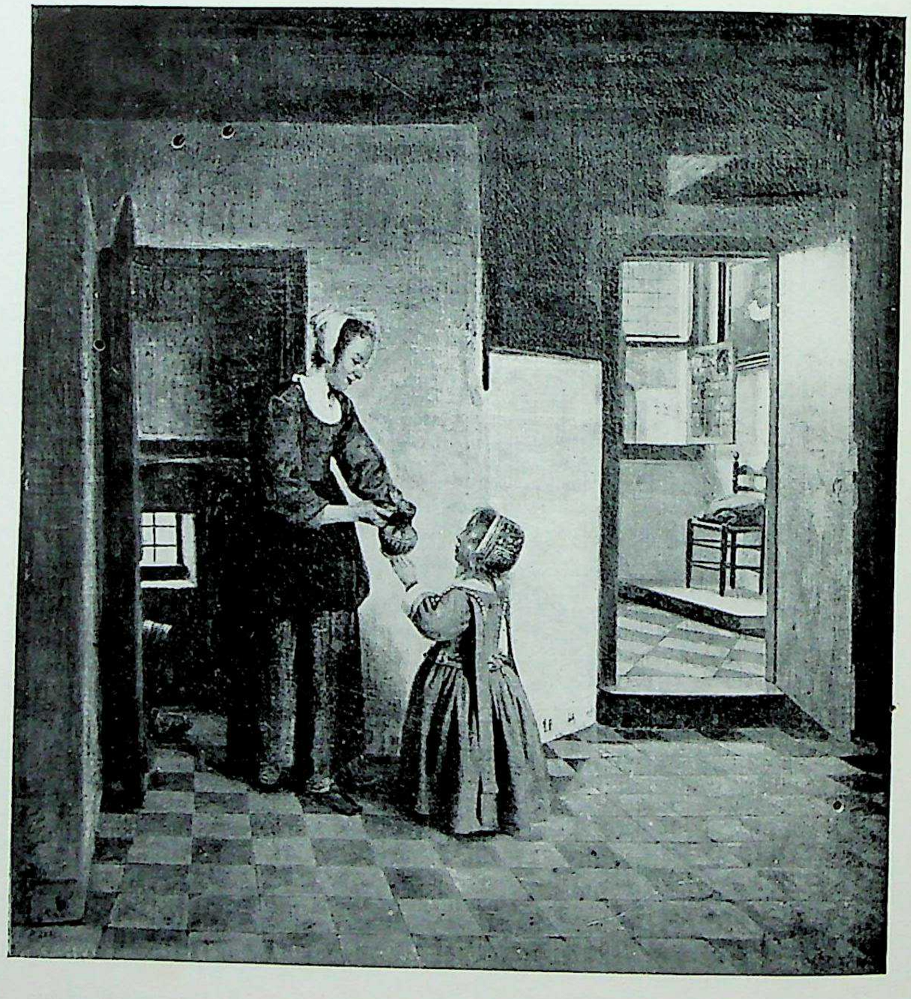
[*See p.* 45.



Amsterdam

STILL LIFE

BY KALF



Amsterdam

THE CELLAR

BY PIETER DE HOOGH

PLATE 75

PIETER DE HOOGH

THE CELLAR

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1630–1677 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

DE HOOGH, like Vermeer, was first and foremost a painter of light. His object seems to have been to capture the sunshine and imprison it either in the red-brick courtyards behind the Dutch houses he loved to paint or within the walls of the house itself. In this picture of a small kitchen, the bare, empty space is all-sufficiently furnished with the warm diffused light. The composition is simple enough. A sunny room opening into another still sunnier, two figures in easy, natural poses, a pleasant pattern of lines in perspective on tiled floor and heavy beamed ceiling—and the thing is done. But the consummate craftsmanship, though nowhere insisted upon, is there all the same. The high-light on the wall behind the figures throws into perfect relief the intimate group of mother and child united by the blue Delft jug passing from hand to hand. The bright red in the woman's dress, de Hoogh's favourite local colour, gives a note of warmth and liveliness to the picture. The same wainscoting of Dutch tiles, noticed in the kitchen in Vermeer's "Milkmaid," adorns the wall here. But for this and a single picture the rooms are innocent of any ornament.

[*See p.* 45.

PLATE 76

GERARD TERBURG

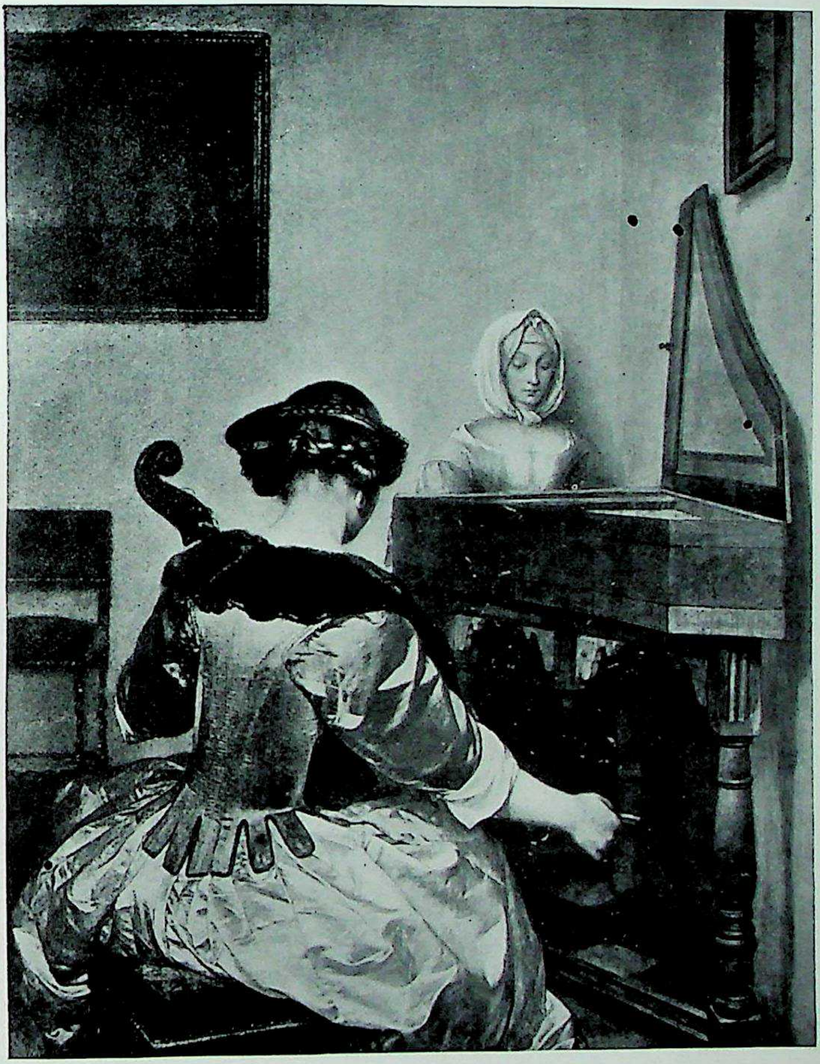
THE CONCERT

DUTCH SCHOOL, 1617–1681 Berlin Museum

TERBURG, the painter *par excellence* of high life in Holland during the seventeenth century, stands somewhat apart in his sense of style and the innate refinement of his taste. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he never sought his subjects in the pot-house or the kitchen, but in the well-furnished salons of the wealthy burgher families of his day. In this elegant conversation piece, dating from about 1660 and signed with the artist's monogram, instead of his usual dark background, against which his figures hold their own by the strength and brilliance of their colouring, Terburg has adopted one of delicate atmospheric greys, thus rendering possible the use of lighter tones in the foreground. The lady playing the viola da gamba with her back turned to the spectator effectively fills the foreground and arrests the eye. Her easy pose and graceful carriage of head and hand are delightfully natural, whereas the attitude of the accompanist at the spinet is as rigid as the Sphinx.

The supreme beauty of the picture lies in the masterly rendering of the textures of satin, velvet and fur and the musician's soft brown hair. The white skirt, the shimmering salmon-pink bodice, surmounted with a collar of deep sable, are painted with unsurpassed fineness yet with superb breadth.

[*See p.* 45.

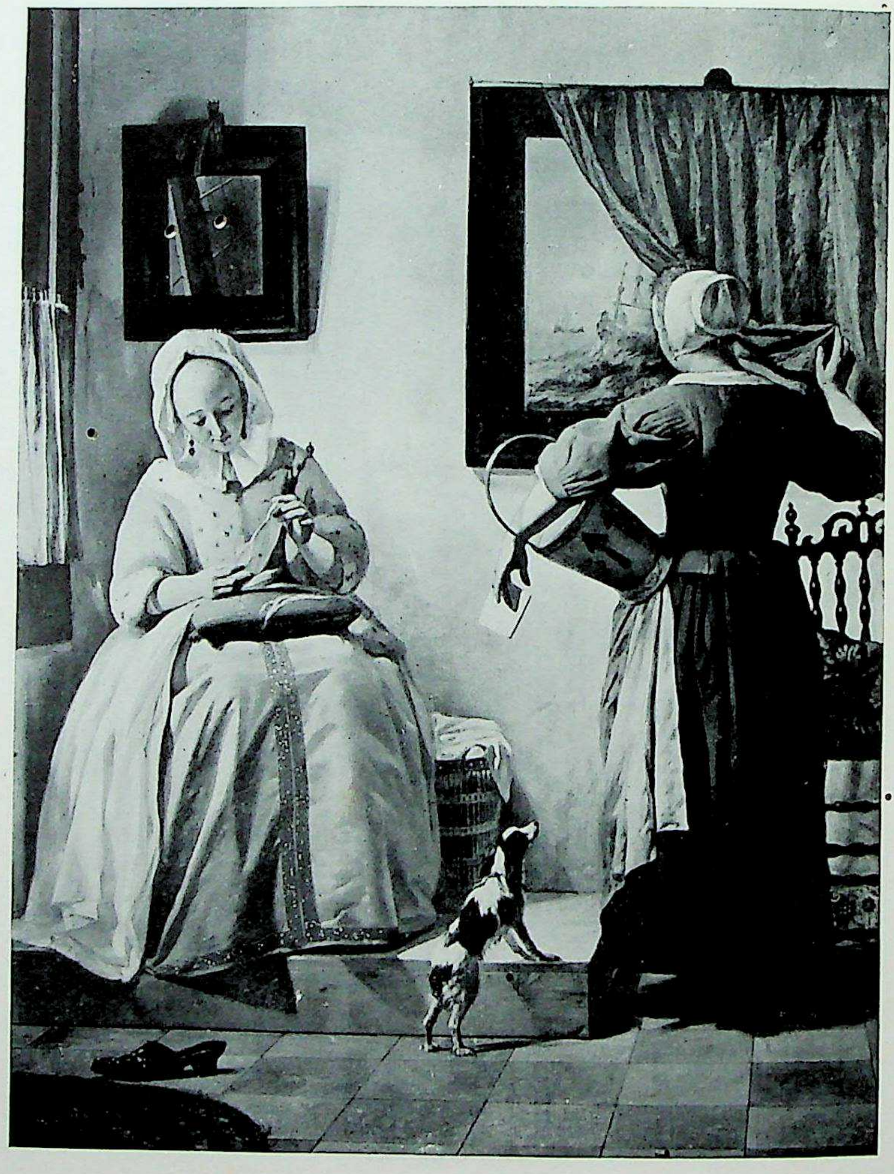


Berlin

THE CONCERT

BY TERBURG

PLATE LXXVII



Otto Beit, Esq.

THE LETTER-READER

BY METSU

PLATE 77

GABRIEL METSU

THE LETTER READER

DUTCH SCHOOL
Circa 1630–1667

Collection of Otto Beit, Esq.
London

AMONG Metsu's masterpieces this picture and its companion piece "The Letter Writer" in the same collection must undoubtedly be reckoned. The writer, an elegant youth, is penning his proposal with fastidious care. Here we have the lady perusing it while the maid awaits the reply, which, from the mistress's expression, cannot be otherwise than favourable. The interior is a typical Dutch room of the seventeenth century, with its tiled floor, cool whitewashed walls and dark picture-frames, one of which contains a stormy sea-piece in the style of Backhuizen, so precious as to be kept covered with a curtain. Our picture, as Metsu intended, tells its own story, and as a piece of anecdote tells it pleasantly and with conviction. But unlike many examples of its class, the subject is treated discreetly and is far from being the only interest. The painting is of exquisite quality. The gradations of light on silk dress and ermine, on wall and floor, are delicate and subtle, the colour bright yet harmonious. The picture is signed by Metsu and shows clear traces of the influence of Vermeer, with whom, it is interesting to note, he was actually living at the time in Amsterdam.

[*See p.* 45.

PLATE 78

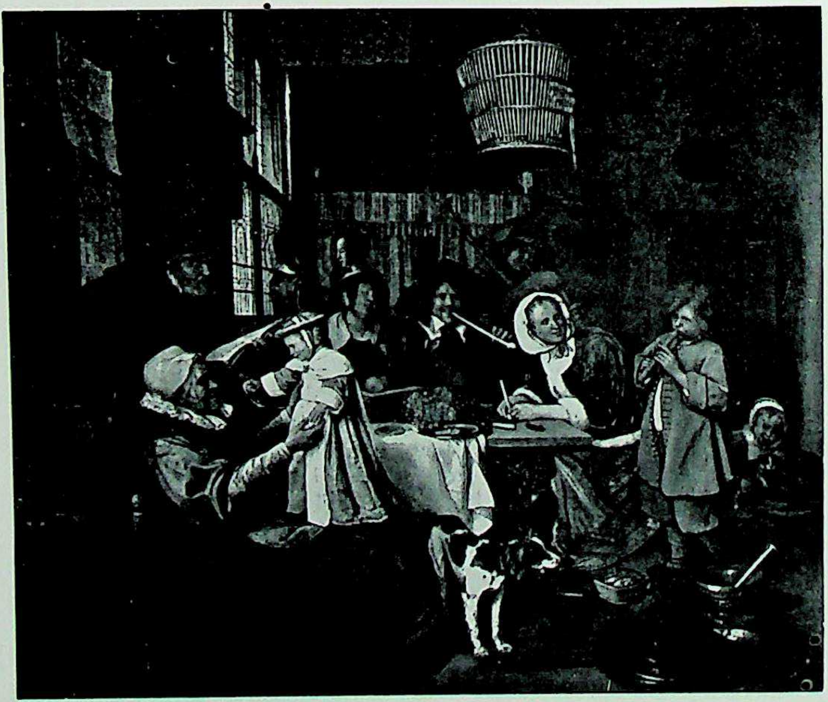
JAN STEEN

THE PAINTER AND HIS FAMILY

Dutch School, *circa* 1626–1679 — The Hague

THE exuberance of Jan Steen's *joie de vivre* is so amazing that his consummate artistry is often forgotten, or at least overlooked. Here we have, according to the paper fixed high upon the wall to the left, a variation by Jan Steen of a theme beloved of Jordaens, "Soo de ouden singen so pypen de jonghen." We are carried away in spite of ourselves by the laughter and good cheer, the humour and high spirits of this picture of home life, when the meal is over and the games begin. Surely never was a happier family party assembled in so circumscribed a space, and merriest of all is the artist himself, with his handsome dare-devil face, enjoying his long white churchwarden pipe, while his wife turns to admire the flute-playing of her eldest boy, a charmingly poetic figure entirely engrossed in the seriousness of his task. There are no less than eleven actors on this small stage, but so cunningly are they grouped in three planes with the exact relative importance to which each is entitled in the composition, that any impression of jostling or overcrowding is precluded. The colour is clear and bright, the surface perfect.

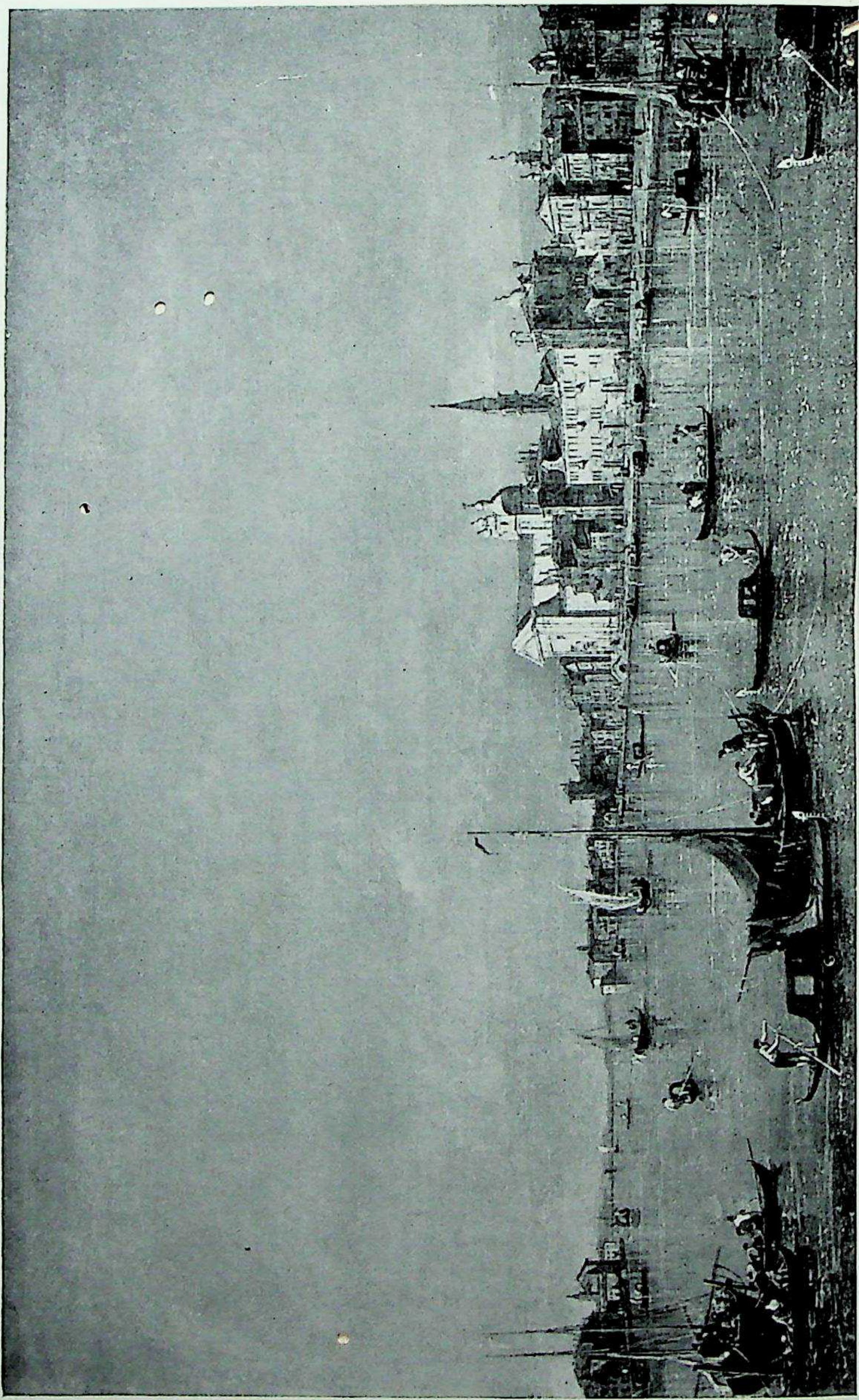
[*See p.* 46.



The Hague

THE PAINTER AND HIS FAMILY

BY JAN STEEN



VIEW OF THE GIUDECCA

BY GUARDI

PLATE 79

FRANCESCO GUARDI

VIEW OF THE GIUDECCA

VENETIAN SCHOOL, 1712–1793 Berlin Museum

GUARDI'S art is of a more joyous, poetical nature than that of his master Canaletto. If in his draughtsmanship he is far less careful and sure, more summary and sketchy, he has a greater feeling for what is paintable and how to paint it. He has the power of showing us Venice as the loveliest of cities, not so much the Venice of history as the City of Delight. He throws life and warmth, imagination and ingenuity and a strong feeling for colour into his work. Here is a shimmering surface of water and sky, full of delicate, airy freshness. The whole is a gleaming expanse of blue, the darker tones of the canal mingling deliciously with the brilliant transparencies of the sky. The long, low horizon, with its fascinating broken line of churches and houses, parts, but does not sever, the upper from the lower half, while the horizontal sweep of the design is emphasised by the dancing gondolas that criss-cross the picture everywhere, leaving little trails of foam in their wake. The warm pinks and reds of the buildings glow against the sky like tender flowers of colour in the blue-grey tonality, while the whole scene is bathed in the sunshine of Venetian summer. In his staccato use of dots and points of light Guardi has adopted a kind of pointillism with the happiest effect.

[*See p.* 46.

PLATE 80

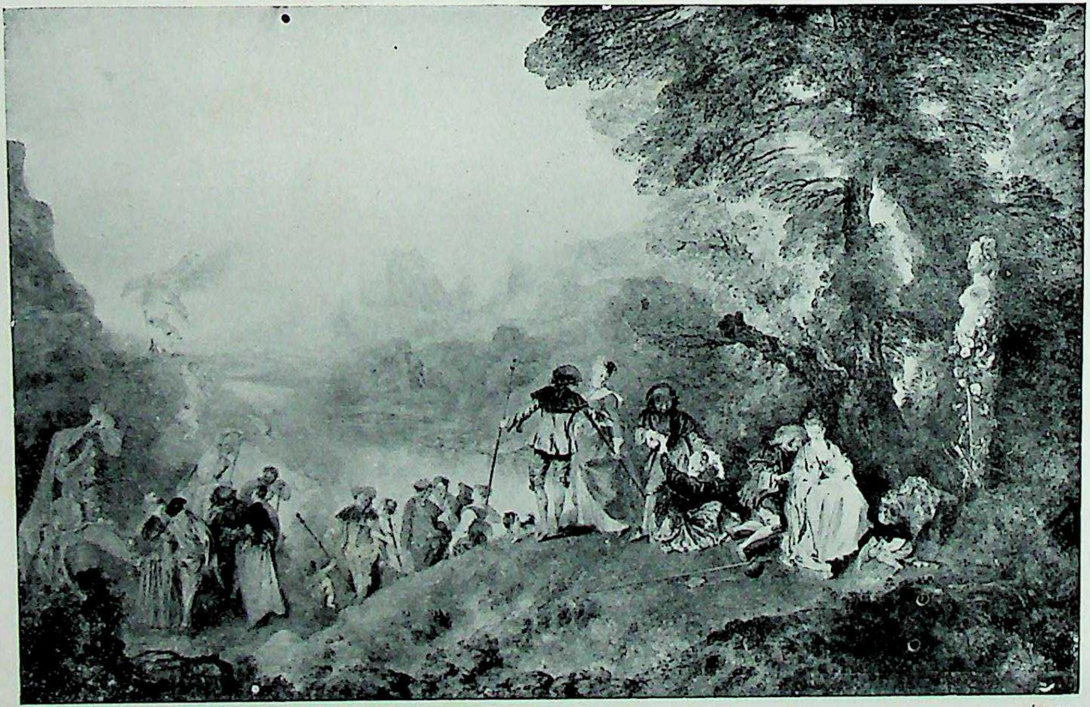
A. WATTEAU

EMBARKATION FOR THE ISLAND OF CYTHERA

FRENCH SCHOOL, 1684–1721 Louvre

IT was to celebrate his entrance into the French Academy that Watteau painted this exquisite sketch. A sketch indeed it really is, or at least a preparatory study for the more elaborate but less spontaneous version of the same subject in the Imperial Collection at Berlin.

All true lovers must make a pilgrimage to the sea-girt isle sacred to the birth of Venus. In the Berlin version the ship's flag-topped mast is seen, but here we can only imagine her lying below the hill whither the long procession of lovers wends its way. The landscape is of surpassing beauty under a sky of tender rose and faded gold, yet it would make but a faint appeal without this moving train of figures, each group instinct with a life and grace of its own. It is Rubens more than anyone who inspired the freedom of the composition and the living force in every pose and gesture. For all its lightness of *motif* and handling this is serious art, the painter a profound, strenuous man whose ingenious, fanciful mind, ever weaving some new earthly Paradise, seemed to increase in activity as his bodily strength abated. His draughtsmanship, rapid, nervous, extraordinarily expressive, was never at fault; his colour-sense, delicately gay, often jewel-like, never betrayed him into forgetting the relation of his figures with their sur-



Louvre

EMBARKATION FOR THE ISLAND OF CYTHERA

BY WATTEAU

roundings or one another. Note with what cunning he unites his groups—no one is isolated, and the eye is unconsciously led on from the pair still dallying under the great tree to the flying Cupids playing so blithely in the still air.

[*See p.* 47.

PLATE 81

J. B. S. CHARDIN

GRACE BEFORE MEAT

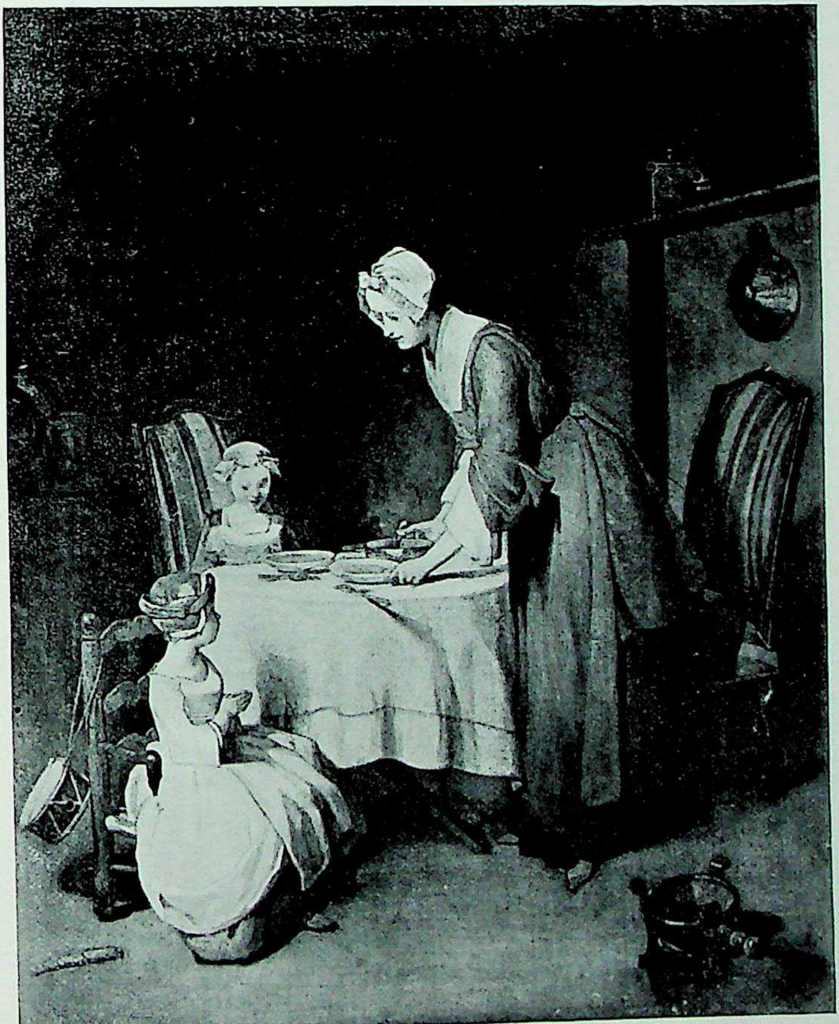
French School, 1698–1776 Louvre

As simple a scene of domestic life as could well be imagined, treated as simply as only a great artist would dare to render it—such is Chardin's little masterpiece. It is a peep into the intimate life of this mother and her children that he gives us, not a story with a moral, nor even an episode. The title matters less than nothing; any other would do as well. But as an interior, a piece of pure genre painting of the highest class, a marvel of happy composition and airy spacing, full of interest, yet free from the slightest sense of crowding, it must always rank among the finest creations of this sober aspect of the eighteenth century.

The room is small, and the mother's figure dominates the scene, yet the eye is able to wander over the expanse of tiled floor with its patterned lines leading to right and left into the picture, or again over the varied surface of the wall behind, seen through a pleasant atmosphere natural to a half-lighted interior. The seated child in the foreground is boldly silhouetted against the white tablecloth, throwing the little shaded face into strong relief in pleasant contrast to that of her sister in full light against the darker wall. The colouring is quiet and restrained, the white cloth of wonderful tone harmonizing with, yet not repeating, the whites of dress and cap. Soft browns and blues with a touch of rose complete the scheme.

Chardin reproduced this composition several times, St. Petersburg possessing the earliest, while this and the Stockholm versions are of later dates.

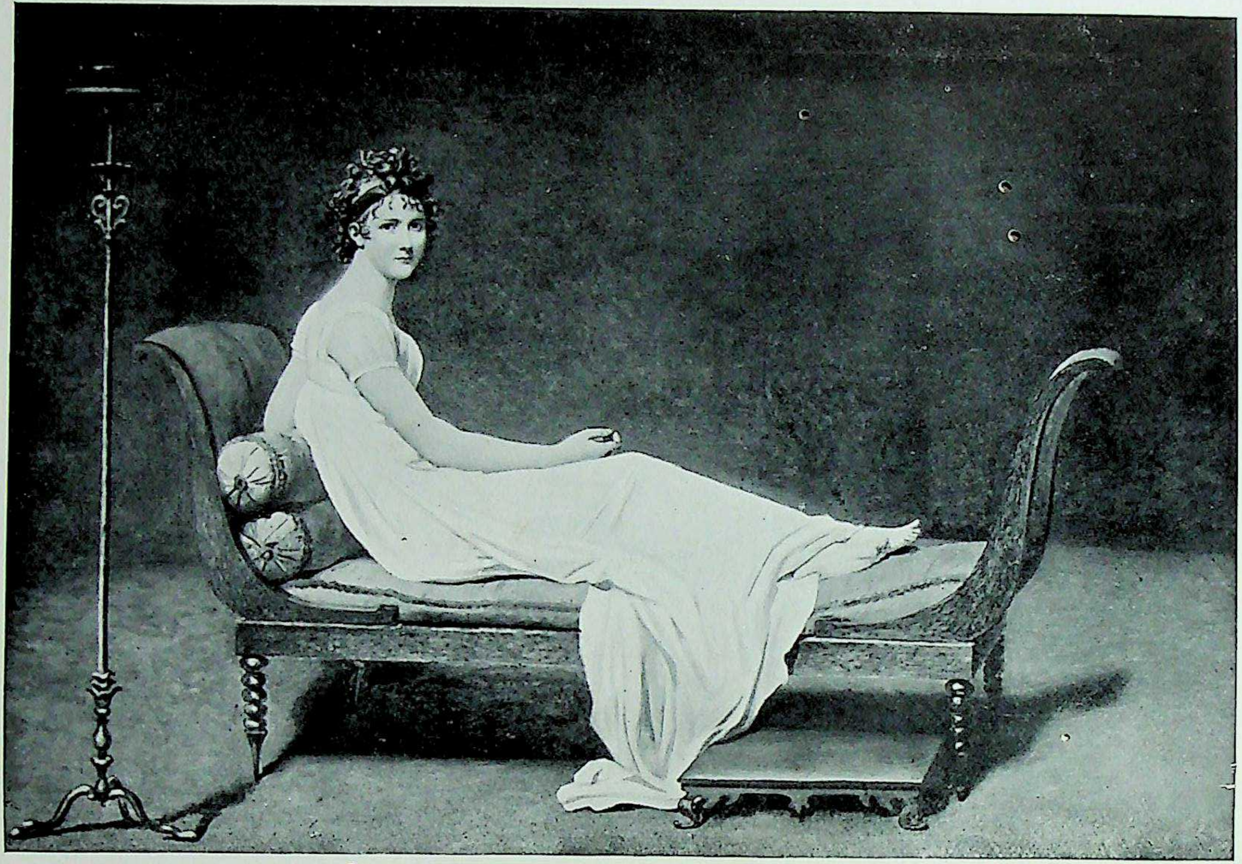
[*See p.* 47.



Louvre

GRACE BEFORE MEAT

BY CHARDIN



Louvre

PORTRAIT OF MADAME RÉCAMIER

BY DAVID

PLATE 82

JACQUES LOUIS DAVID

PORTRAIT OF MADAME RÉCAMIER

FRENCH SCHOOL, 1748–1825 Louvre

IT is strange to realize that the David who painted the straightforward portrait-group of Michel Gérard and his children with unaffected naturalism, sparing nothing, omitting nothing, is also the David of the artificial, would-be heroic compositions of the "Sabines" and the "Oath of the Horatii." In his "Madame Récamier," painted about 1800, he has steered a middle course. The whole conception is severely classical, though based upon Roman rather than Greek art. The simple Empire costume, the flowing but restrained lines of the couch, the tall bronze lamp that might have come from Pompeii, the spacious effect resulting from absence of accessories and the suppression of detail—all combine to produce an impression of beauty, chaste, tasteful and statuesque indeed, yet almost cold were it not for the living personality revealed by the painter of the woman who played her part with so much spirit in the court life of the First Empire. There is character as well as symmetry in the features, intelligence in the steady eyes of this gifted woman, the friend of Chateaubriand, the pupil of Madame de Staël, whose salon was thronged by all the political and literary celebrities of the day.

[*See p.* 48.

PLATE 83

WILLIAM HOGARTH

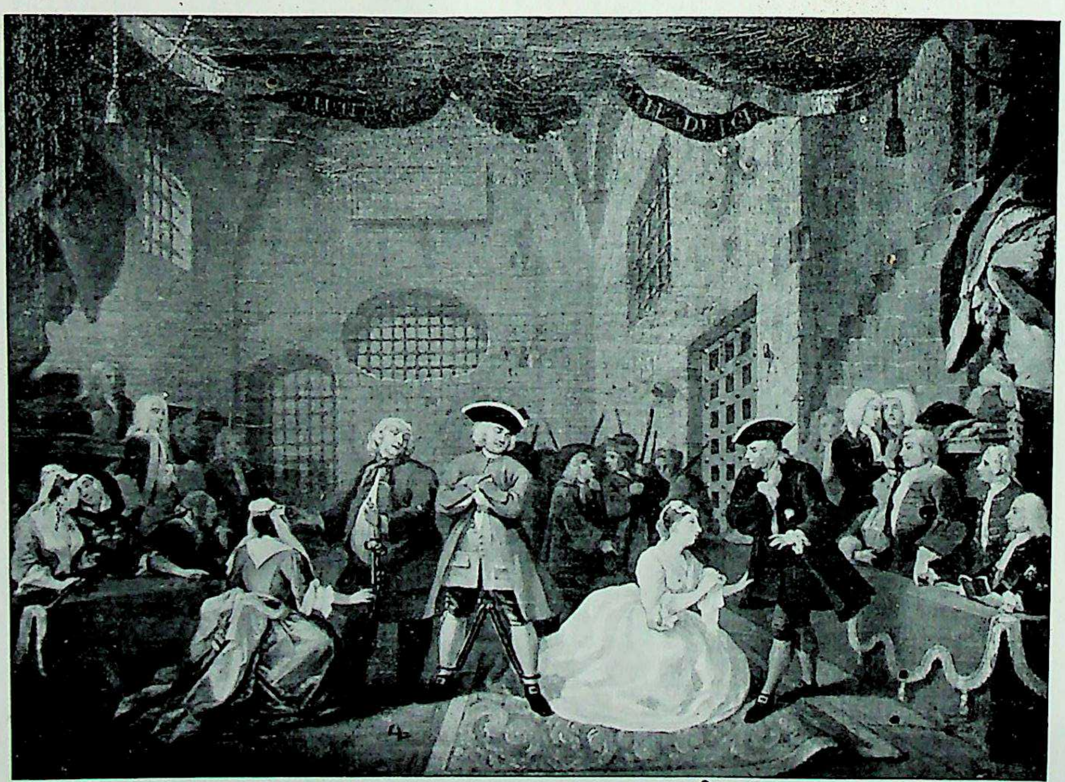
SCENE FROM THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1697–1764 National Gallery

THIS picture, a very early work, though less famous than some of those making up the great series "Marriage à la Mode," or "The Rake's Progress," is free from many of their faults and yet lacks few of their special qualities. The canvas represents, with that extraordinary descriptive power in which Hogarth stands almost unrivalled, a passage from Gay's lively play produced at Lincoln's Inn in 1728. The scene chosen is Newgate Prison, with Captain Macheath in fetters between Polly Peachum on the right and Lucy Lockitt, the two rivals for his hand and heart. The Captain dominates without monopolizing the centre of the stage. Earlier in the play he has sung his famous song—

> "How happy could I be with either
> Were t'other dear charmer away!"

Now the plot has thickened, and in this, the last act, Polly and Lucy, each with her villainous "Papa" in attendance, kneel together before the luckless Macheath, claiming him for husband, an embarrassing situation to which the gallant Captain can only reply that, as he is just about to be hanged for prison-breaking, the affair will soon be at an end without his disobliging either of his fair suitors. Among the audience portraits of celebrities of the day,



National Gallery

SCENE FROM, THE BEGGAR'S OPPERA

BY HOGARTH

including Gay himself and the Duke of Bolton, can be identified.

It was the beautiful Lavinia Fenton, the "Queen of English Song," who represented Polly Peachum and assured the immediate success of the piece.

The life and vigour of the picture is amazing, the poses easy, characteristic and varied; the scene is dramatic without being stagy. Hogarth seldom attempted to give an idea of breeding in his pictures, but surely in the figures of the Captain and his "wives" he has almost succeeded! The picture is of a wonderful transparence and depth, the colouring clear and harmonious.

[*See p.* 49.

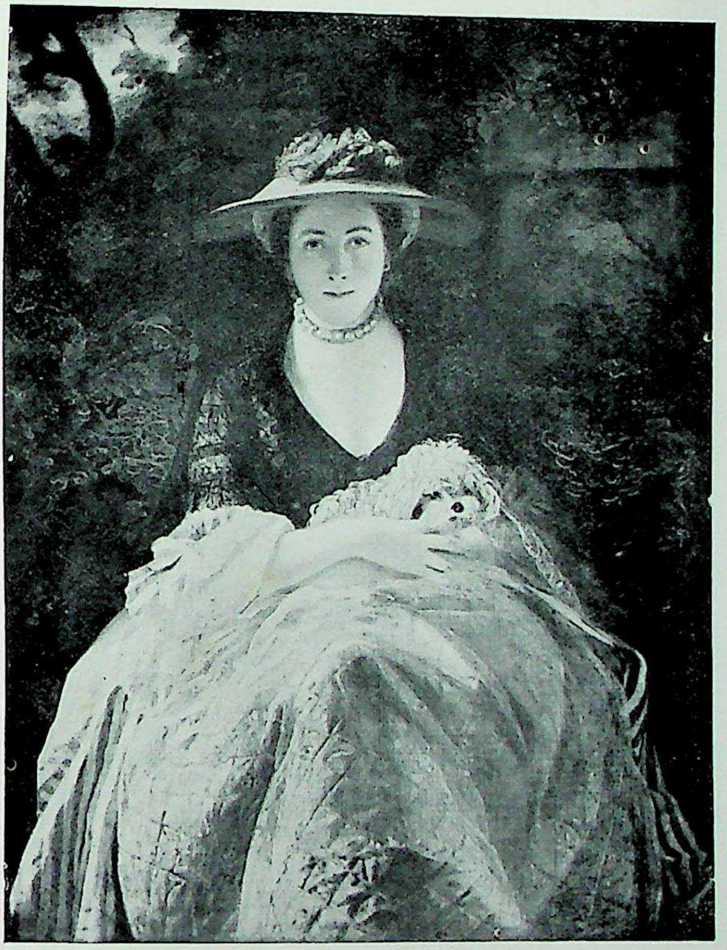
PLATE 84

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

PORTRAIT OF NELLY O'BRIEN

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1723–1792 Wallace Gallery

IT was comparatively early in his career, in 1763, that Reynolds painted the "Nelly O'Brien" of the Wallace Collection, the first of his four versions of this famous beauty. This, the first really great picture that he had produced, was sold during his lifetime for a paltry ten pounds. His model, a lady of supreme attraction for her numerous admirers in real life as for ourselves in her picture, gave him his opportunity. It was as a master of colour that he was quick to seize it, and without its colour the picture is but a ghost of itself. The rich vibrant black of the lace mantilla over the shoulders tells brilliantly against the dazzlingly fair flesh. The polonaise of tender blue and white and the lace gauze thrown over the knees, softening the lovely old rose of the quilted petticoat, are brushed in with incredible lightness. So might Rubens have painted her, though perhaps with less refinement of expression. And, indeed, Reynolds has here set himself the same problem of chiaroscuro which Rubens solved so triumphantly in his so-called "Chapeau de Paille," throwing the face into half shadow under the broad-brimmed hat. Had the English master not painted this before his visit to Antwerp, where he saw and admired Rubens's picture, we might well have believed that his work was inspired by it.



Wallace Gallery

PORTRAIT OF NELLY O'BRIEN

BY REYNOLDS

The face is very beautiful with its perfect oval, regular features and pleasant eyes looking steadily at the spectator. The dog on her lap serves to bridge the colour distance between sunlit arms and black bodice, but scarcely adds to the life of the picture.

[*See p.* 49.

PLATE 85

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

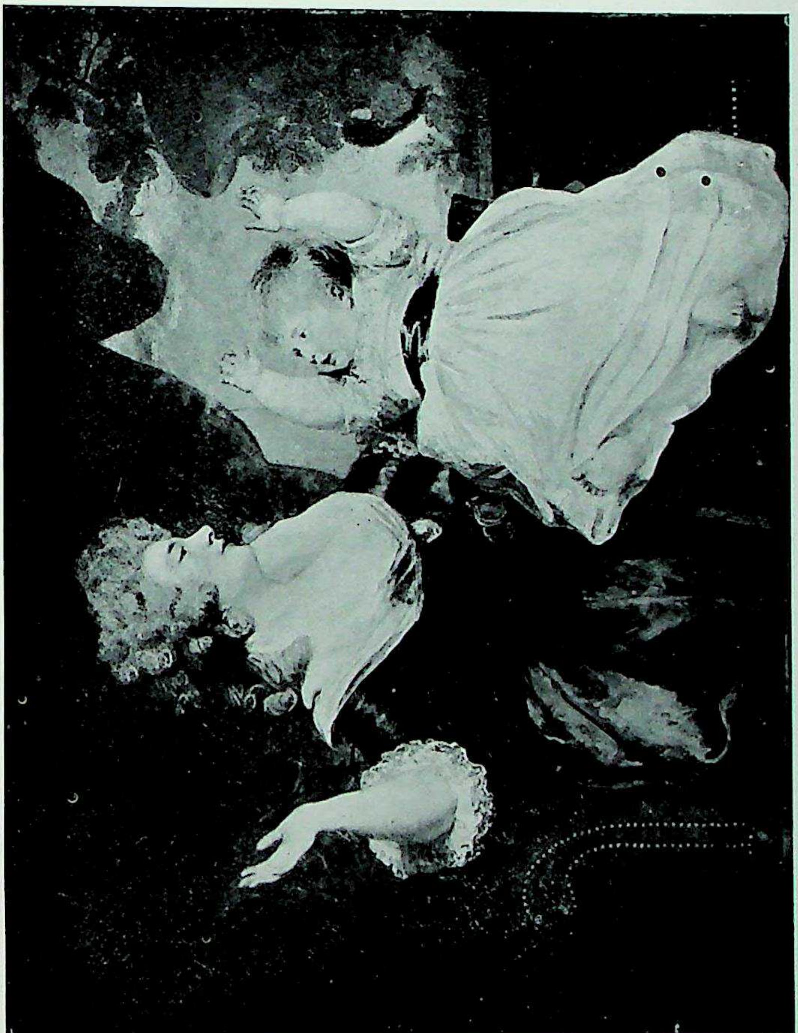
THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE AND HER DAUGHTER

ENGLISH SCHOOL 1723–1792	Collection of the Duke of Devonshire

IT is a mother with her child that we have here in all essentials—the duchess is but an accident. Surprisingly fresh and spirited is this presentment, and one might imagine that it had been seen with the eyes of youth rather than age, but that it was painted in 1786, when the artist was already an old man. In truth, however, Reynolds never lost his freshness of vision and delightful inventiveness, for all his busy life in the studio and in society. They are playing a famous game, this mother and child, and the old man enters into the fun. Reynolds is almost always in this felicitous vein in the presence of a child model, and his power of perpetuating the unconscious charm of early childhood is one of the rarest of his gifts, and one at least in which he far out-rivals Gainsborough.

In this canvas his broad easy brush never seems to have hesitated. The picture in his mind was docile when he came to transfer it to canvas, and there are no signs of retouching or alteration.

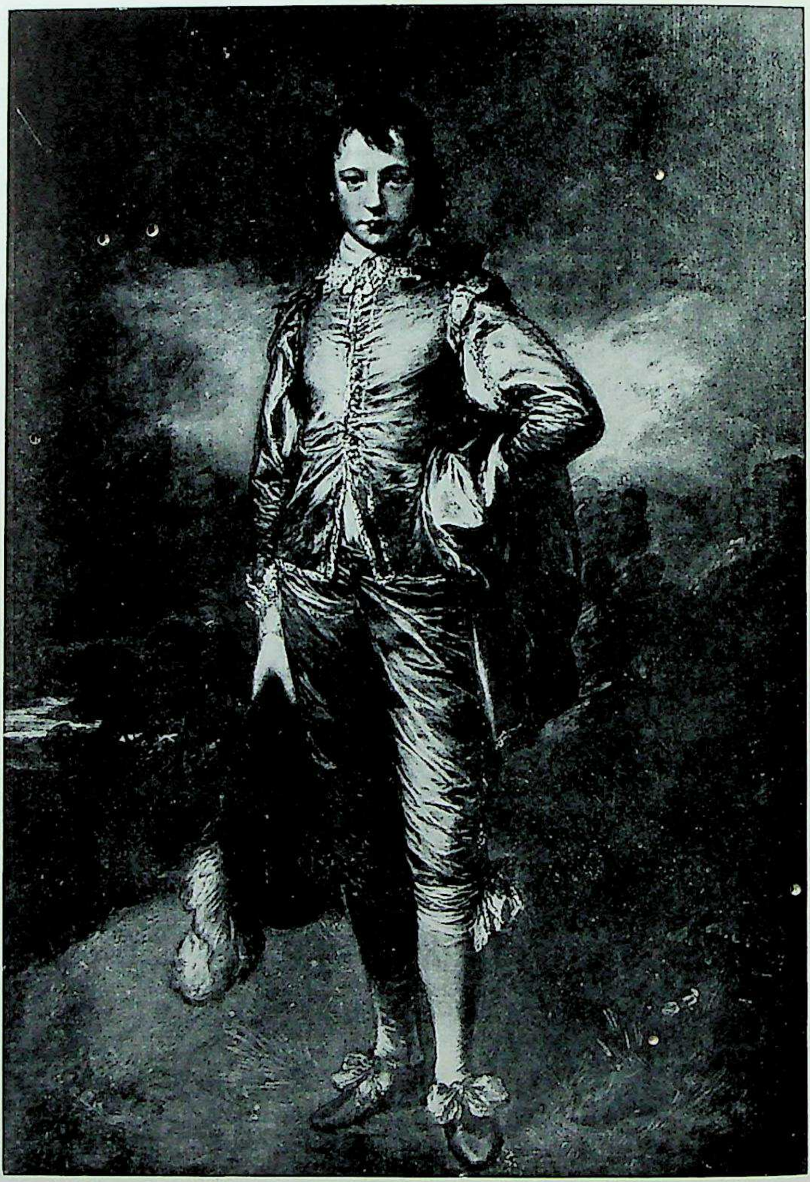
[*See p.* 49.



Duke of Devonshire

THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE AND HER DAUGHTER

BY REYNOLDS



Pasadena

THE BLUE BOY

BY GAINSBOROUGH

PLATE 86

T. GAINSBOROUGH

THE BLUE BOY

ENGLISH SCHOOL 1727–1788	Henry E. Huntington Library & Art Gallery, Pasadena

THE old legend, that this fascinating portrait was painted in 1779 by way of protest against a dictum of Reynolds, has been shaken if not shattered by the most distinguished of Gainsborough's biographers. It is true that Reynolds did enunciate the theory that the masses of light in a picture should be of warm yellow or red, that blues, greys and greens should not be selected, and that not even Titian and Rubens could achieve masterpieces in defiance of this principle. But, as Sir Walter Armstrong has shown, this is based on a confusion of thought, and was ignored even by Reynolds himself in practice, while, if any picture by Gainsborough be construed into such protest, it is the Mrs. Siddons.

At all events, this portrait of Jonathan Buttall (a rich ironmonger's son, we are astonished to learn) is a picture of rare quality and distinction. We may discern in it something of the spirit of Van Dyck, but the portrait remains intensely individual for all that. Gainsborough has not yet reached his later, more feathery manner; the painting is solid, firm, virile. The figure is in happy harmony with the background, a broadly brushed-in landscape of ochres and greens. The colour, a blue of wonderful richness and depth, is pure and satisfying and broken by varied tones slipping into greens and greys in the half-lights. How graceful and manly the pose, without affectation or swagger, yet serenely conscious of making a brave figure in those fine clothes of his!

[*See p.* 50.

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PLATE 87

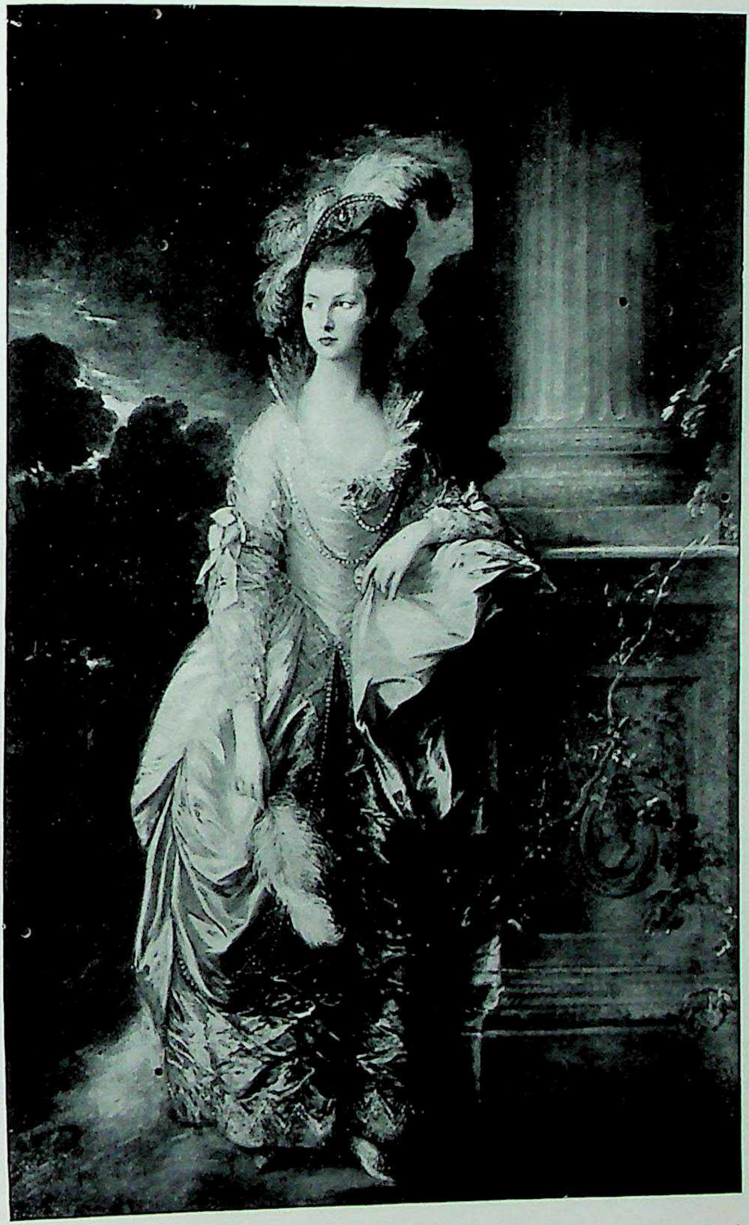
T. GAINSBOROUGH

PORTRAIT OF THE HON. MRS. GRAHAM

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1727–1788 National Gallery of Scotland

ONE of the happiest inspirations of the most brilliant period of Gainsborough's maturity, that of the middle of the seventies, the full-length portrait of the Honourable Mrs. Graham would hold its own among the greatest portraits of every age. A charming personality she must have possessed, this beautiful wife of the distinguished veteran of the Peninsular War, and we can well imagine the artist's delight in such a model, and his dashing off the picture in a fine frenzy of enthusiasm. It is a miracle of colour, the skirt a wonder of crimson rose, beautifully modulated, surmounted by a white satin bodice painted with caressing lightness. This in its turn is crowned by the hat of silver grey, plumed with its dazzling white ostrich-feather, repeating the one she holds so carelessly in her hand. There is due subordination everywhere — nothing is forced or overemphasized. The pose is restful, the expression serious, with just a suggestion of melancholy to give depth and character to the young face.

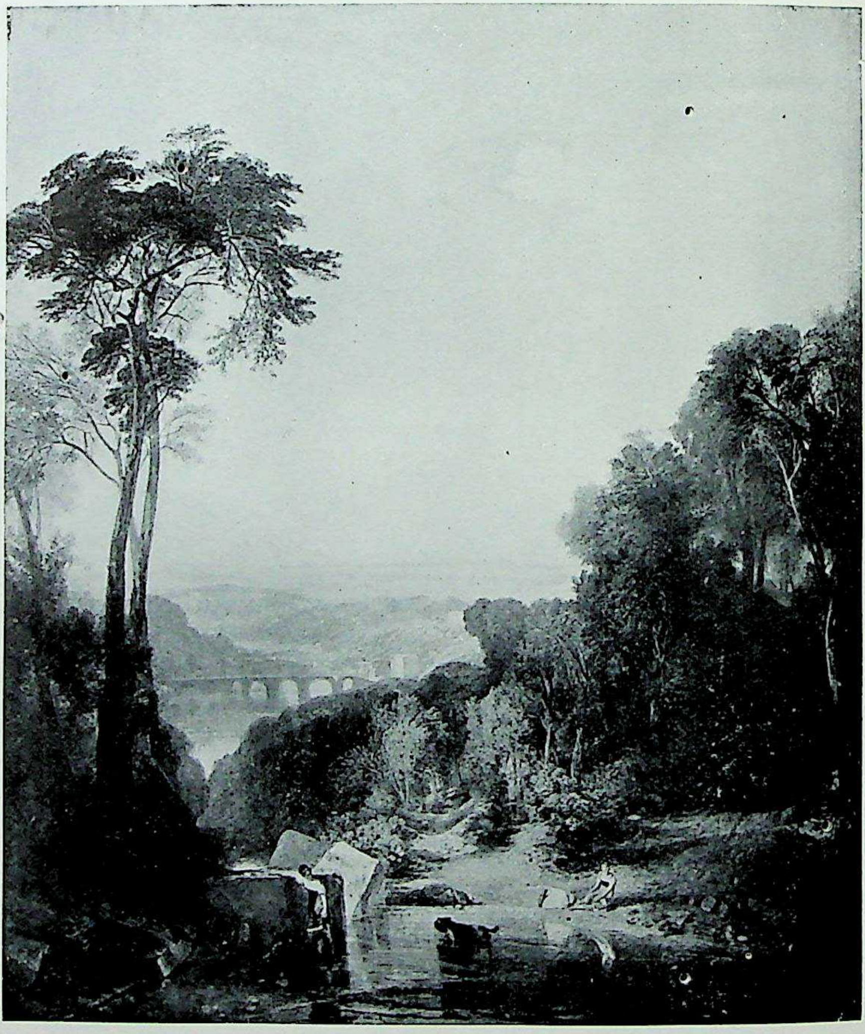
[*See p.* 50.



National Gallery of Scotland

THE HON. MRS. GRAHAM

BY GAINSBOROUGH



National Gallery

CROSSING THE BROOK

BY TURNER

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PLATE 88

J. M. W. TURNER

CROSSING THE BROOK

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1775–1851 National Gallery

"CROSSING the Brook," painted in 1815, is perhaps the grandest achievement of Turner's early pre-Italian period. Reminiscences of Claude and Claude's Italian compositions haunt this fantasy on a Devonshire theme. The origin of the picture is characteristic enough. Walking with a friend in Devonshire, Turner paused at a spot where the Tamar was seen below, winding its way through the valley to the English Channel. "We shall see nothing finer than this if we stay till sundown," he remarked as they turned to go home. But the composition and details of the scene were stored up in that astounding pictorial memory, and with the knowledge and certainty which his long apprenticeship had given him he was able to reproduce the impression that had instantly stamped itself on his mind. Exact truth to a particular locality Turner neither desired nor achieved. He preferred to combine the more general truth of his own impressions with an artistic license which elongated the tall slenderness of the somewhat conventional trees on the left, and exaggerated the height of the ground from which the scene is viewed. The upright shape of the picture, unusual for Turner, who generally designed in oblong form, increases the sense of lofty spaciousness. The quiet tonality, cool blues, greys and browns, is relieved only by a few touches of warm local colour in the figures. Exquisite is the pearly distance melting into the high arch of the sky and, after the manner of Claude, thrown back by the dark trees in the foreground.

[*See p.* 51.

PLATE 89

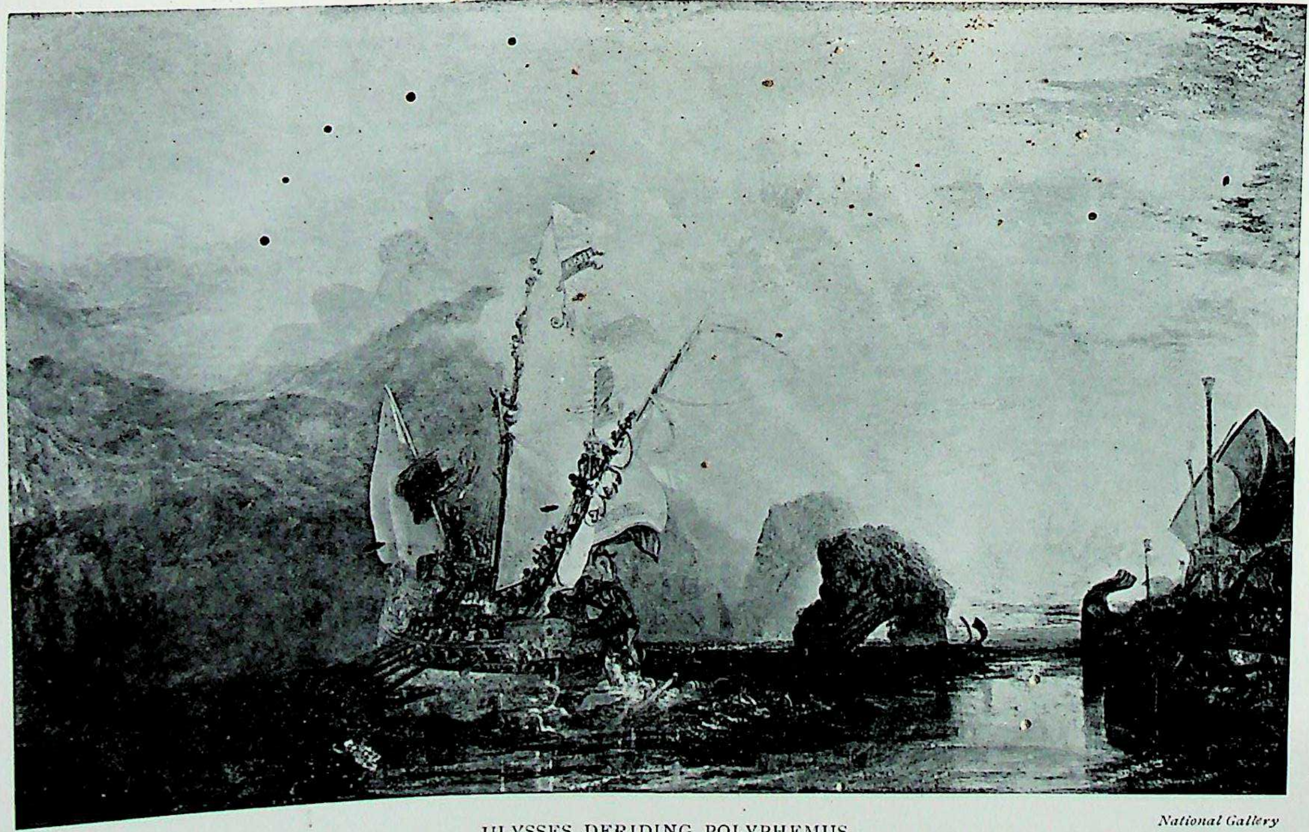
J. M. W. TURNER

ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1775–1851 National Gallery

THE result of Turner's visit to Italy in 1820 shows itself in an almost startling change from the chiaroscuro effects of his earlier period to the splendid colour rhapsodies of his maturity. Heavy masses and strongly contrasted light and shadow give way before a treatment in which the utmost brilliance of light and colour is achieved. This subject from the Odyssey offered Turner full scope for the exercise of his tremendous imagination, and allowed perfect liberty of treatment. It is the thrilling moment when Ulysses, having blinded the monster Cyclops and regained the safe shelter of his ship, turns to fling one last taunt at his raging but helpless captor, while the mariners hurriedly unfurl the sails and ply the oars of the gold and crimson galley. The huge form of Polyphemus is dimly seen through the mist sprawling on the hills above, his arms thrown up in passionate gesture of impotent rage, and, to enhance the sense of strange wonder and magic, the sun is just rising above the deep blue water in gorgeous pageantry of orange and scarlet. But his warm rays have not yet touched the dark transparent depths under the lee of the great ship, where shoals of fishes and pale green mermaids disport themselves.

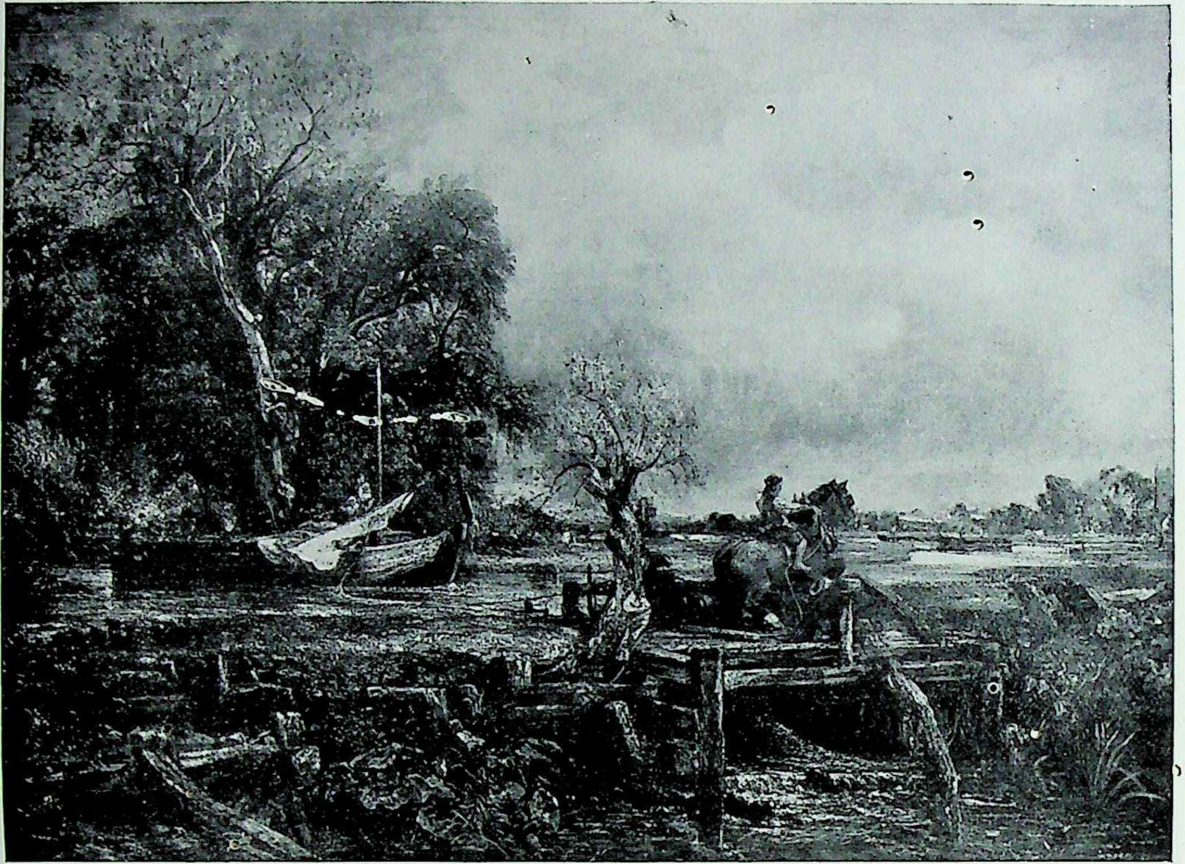
[*See p.* 51.



National Gallery

ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS

BY TURNER



Diploma Gallery, Burlington House

DEDHAM LOCK, OR THE LEAPING HORSE

BY CONSTABLE

PLATE 90

JOHN CONSTABLE

DEDHAM LOCK, OR THE LEAPING HORSE

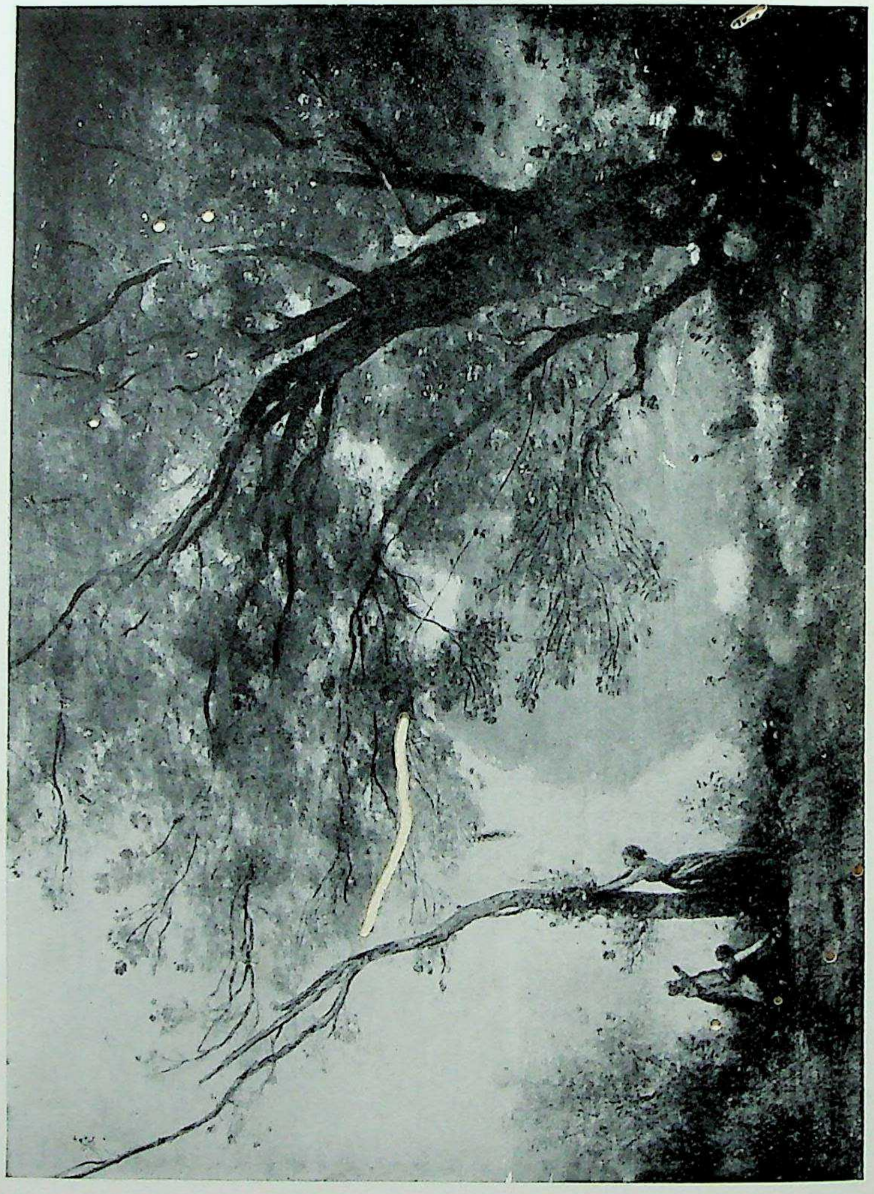
ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1776–1837 Diploma Gallery, Burlington House

"THERE is room enough," wrote Constable in 1820, "for a natural painter." "Perhaps the sacrifices I make for lightness and brightness are too great," he added, "but these things are the essence of landscape." Such were his views of landscape art,—to be faithful to his discovery of light and colour everywhere, to render them faithfully, critically, devotedly, even at the cost of the traditional ideas of beauty. No one of his day had dared to preach openly that the painter's eye must feed upon nature and not upon other men's pictures, that to the painter a gallery was a snare, the old masters a dangerous fetish. Yet Claude and Rubens never had a more devoted admirer than the painter who looked beyond them and their works.

Painted in 1825 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in the same year, the picture shows Dedham Lock on the river Stour, with a horse leaping a barrier on the tow-path. The scheme is bold and wonderfully successful, the balance and rhythm of the picture, partly owing to an alteration made in the composition when the exhibition was over, superb. The great tree-mass on the left sets off the boat with its half-lowered sail; to the right is a splendid cloud-swept sky against which the figures of horse and rider add a sense of tremendous yet restrained life and vigour. The whole effect is fresh and breezy, the colour laid on in firm broad masses, sometimes with the palette-knife, and with brilliant soft high-lights skilfully disposed. Unfortunately it is so badly hung in the Diploma Gallery that it is impossible to enjoy it to the full.

[*See p.* 51.

PLATE XCI



THE LAKE
BY COROT

Louvre

PLATES

PLATE 91

J. B. C. COROT

THE LAKE

French School, 1795–1875 Louvre

Nature at peace, Nature in her idyllic mood, as he saw her in his beloved woods of Barbizon, to this phase did Corot devote the closing years of his long life. He had found his true vocation—to interpret the poetry of the woodland scene, bathed in delicate veil of sunlit mist or languid in the cool transparencies of evening. In contrast to Constable's sturdy naturalism, Corot's art may appear vague and unsubstantial. If the Englishman set down what he saw with his eyes, Corot gave back what he felt through the medium of his temperament. For bright local colour he seems to have cared but little, gradually adopting an almost monochrome palette, relieved here and there by a stab of warm red. This monochrome effect is perhaps partly accidental, due to the subsequent fading of the yellows he used. In his foliage he achieves an almost miraculous illusion of delicate quivering, every leaf seeming to dance and tremble in the light reflected from above and below, from sky and lake. From the strong, solid tree-trunk the feathery foliage radiates as in a fan. The mysterious distance is half hidden in the drenched sun-illumined mist, half revealed in the mirror of the silent sheet of water.

[*See p.* 52.

PLATE 92

J. COURBET

THE WAVE

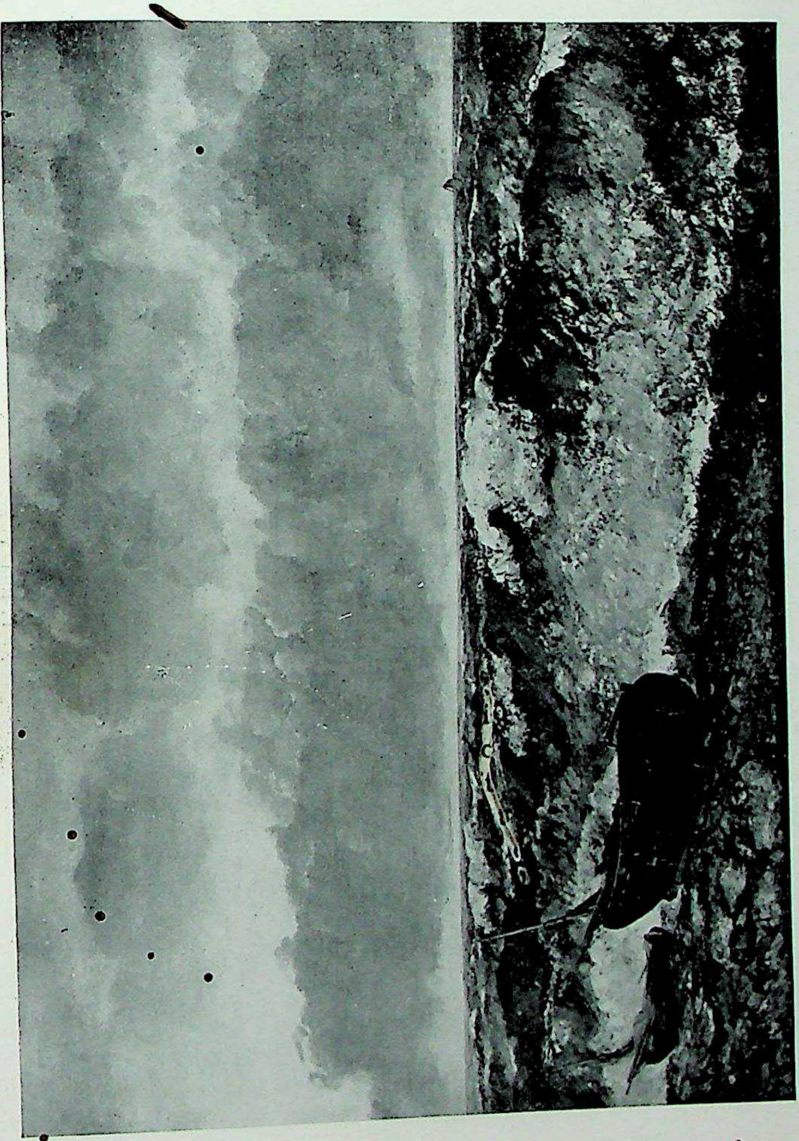
FRENCH SCHOOL, 1819-1877 Louvre

THIS picture, which was acquired by the French Government shortly after the artist's death, might seem symbolic of the stormy career of this artist-politician, whose passionate energy was divided between the overthrowing of the great Vendôme Column at the time of the Commune and producing such virile work as his portrait of himself or the "Cribleuses de Blé."

The climax of the storm is past, but a long low bank of billowing cloud just above the horizon, finely contrasted with the clear washed blue on the left, lies scowling right across the picture. The sea is still storm-tossed, the white horses tear across its deep grey-green surface, relieved by the dazzling shimmer of their snowy manes, while in the foreground hangs curling for a moment a great solid, blue mass before it is dashed to pieces thundering on the beach. The height of the wave is well suggested by the two boats, while the pigmy brown sail tossing on the horizon adds forcibly to the sense of limitless isolation on the face of the waters. No studio picture this, but a piece of real life, strongly felt, strongly presented. The smell of the salt wind and the agitated sea is in our nostrils, the boom of the breakers in our ears as we gaze.

[*See p.* 52.

PLATE XCII

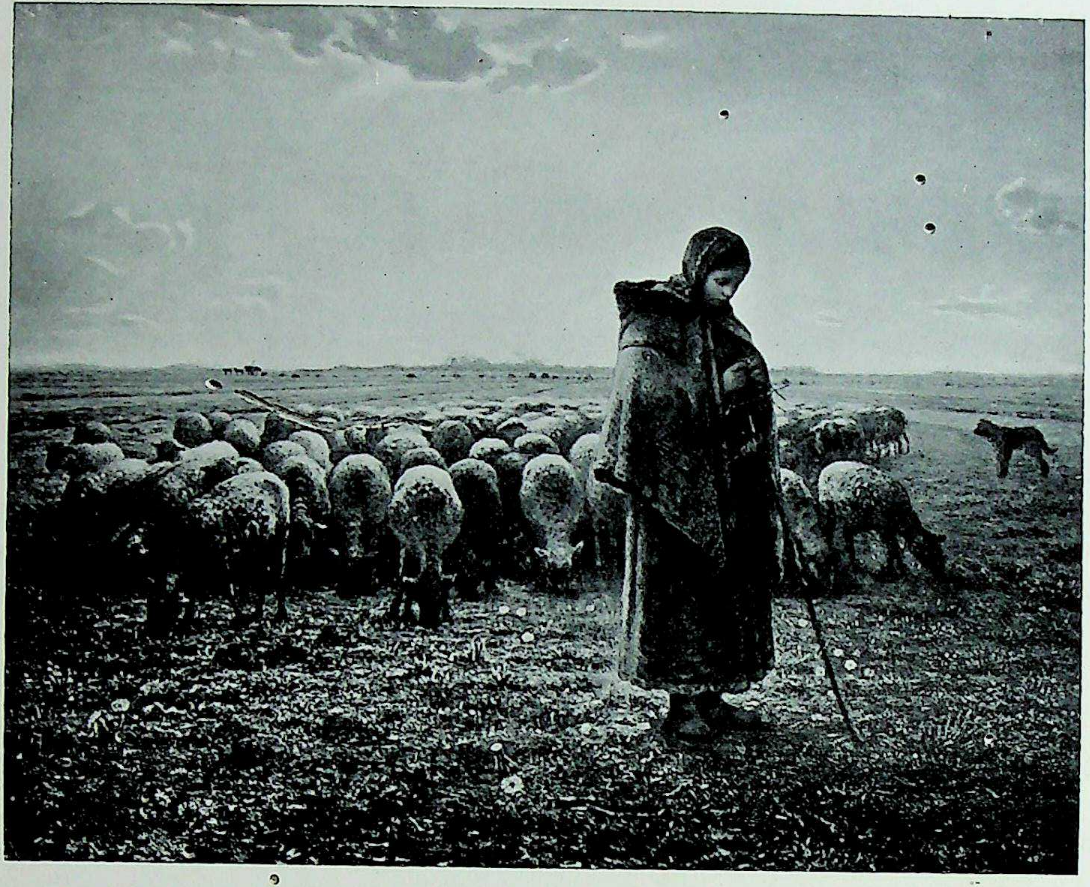


THE WAVE

BY COURBET

Louvre

PLATE XCIII



Chauchard Collection, Paris

THE SHEPHERDESS

BY MILLET

PLATE 93

J. F. MILLET

THE SHEPHERDESS

FRENCH SCHOOL, 1814–1875 Chauchard Collection, Paris

MILLET, for all his intimacy with the other painters of the Barbizon community, Rousseau, Diaz and Corot, stands somewhat apart, a titanic, solitary figure. A peasant himself by birth, he found his true vocation after years of unsuccessful plodding, and, once found, followed it faithfully until his death. The relations of humble men and women with the earth on which they toil to support themselves, and the beauty and romance which in his eyes they possessed at their daily work, these became the inspirations of his later life—hence the great series of Georgics in paint, as they have been well described. The shepherdess, bowed and silent, all-engrossed in her knitting as she slowly leads her flock—there is something primitive, almost patriarchal in the conception. "I have always shunned," wrote the painter, "with a kind of horror everything approaching the sentimental"; and here in the presence of this simple unaffected scene we realize how far removed was his art from any such weakness.

As a colour-scheme it is a pleasant combination of delicate blue distance with stronger blue in the dress beneath the golden-brown cloak and red hood. The drawing of figure and flock and the strange, slanting light of the late afternoon sun are entirely convincing, though the picture was painted from memory without model in the studio. [*See p.* 52.

PLATE 94

JOSEF ISRAELS

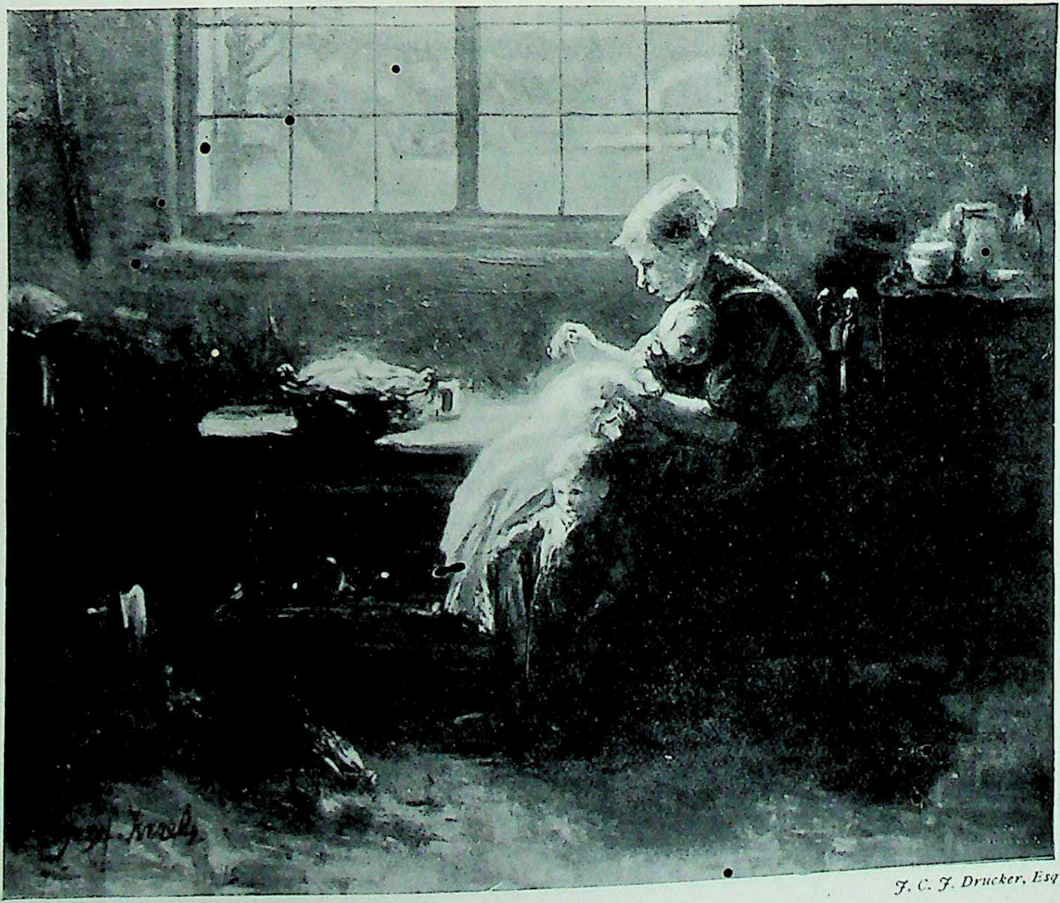
A MOTHER'S CARE

DUTCH SCHOOL, *b.* 1824 Collection of J. C. J. Drucker, Esq. London

PECULIARLY attracted as Israels has shown himself by the humbler aspects of modern Dutch life, he touches with deep sentiment and true poetry every moment in the history of his poorer fellows. In much the same way the English artists settled at Newlyn have interpreted the intimate sentiment of the fisher-folk among whom they live, finding in the quiet round of their daily occupations subjects ready-made for the painter.

There is nothing forced either in the feeling or the execution of such a work as this. The scene is intensely, sympathetically felt, but there is no sentimentality or mawkishness. It is full of restraint. The full light on the two children, carelessly and naturally posed, is thrown up softened and broken on to the absorbed face of the young mother, busily plying her needle under obvious difficulties. Like Rembrandt, Israels understands the significance of mysterious gloom from which half-suggested forms emerge. The presence of the father is hinted at by his spade, the simple tool of his calling. Fowls wander freely about the floor, pecking at what little they may chance to find. Through the window, trees, a church and the houses of the village are discerned. The colour-scheme is delicate and refined.

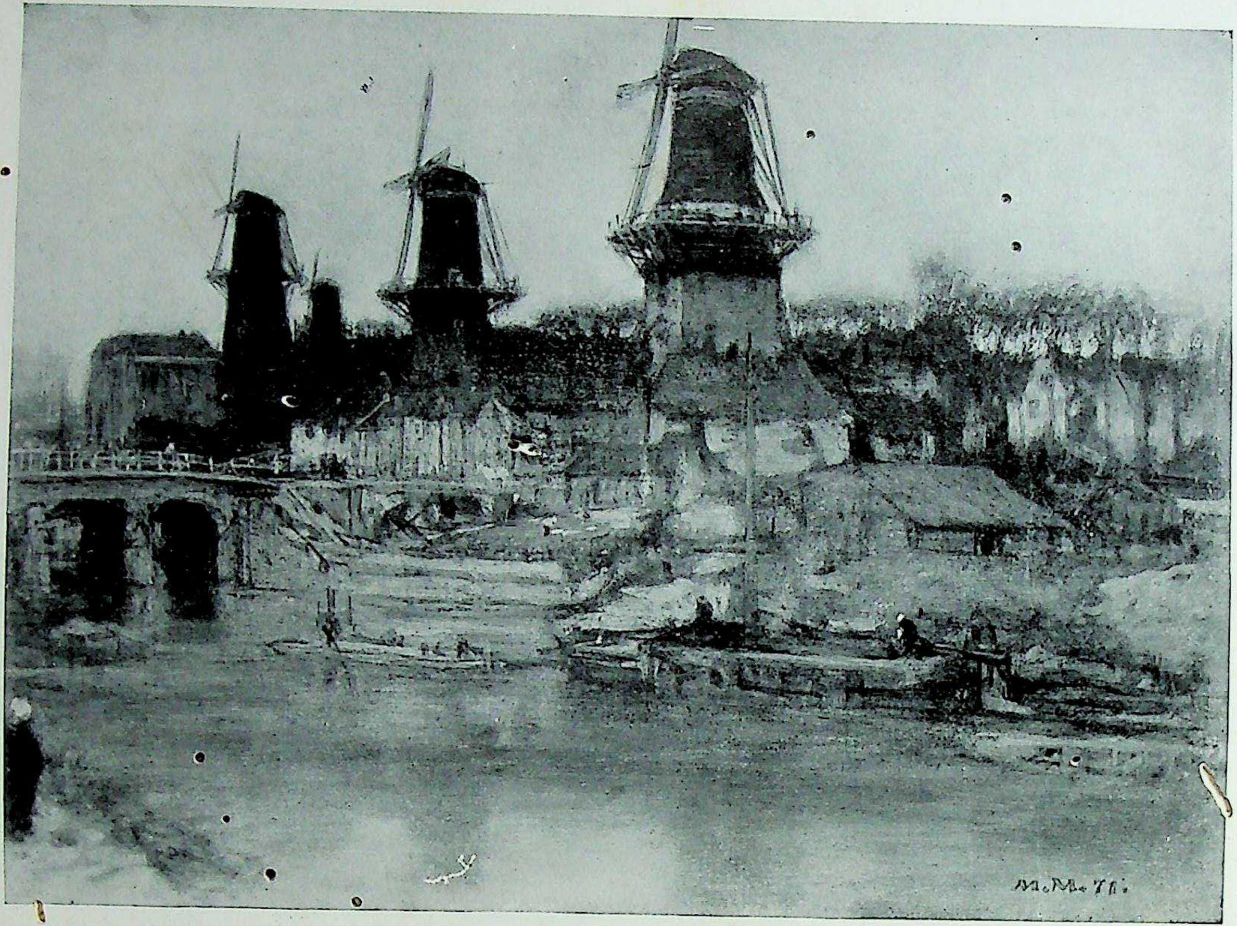
[*See p.* 52.



J. C. J. Drucker, Esq.

A MOTHER'S CARE

BY ISRAELS



Prof. Michael Sadler

THE FOUR WINDMILLS
BY MATTHEW MARIS

PLATE 95

MATTHEW MARIS

THE FOUR WINDMILLS

DUTCH SCHOOL, *b.* 1839 Prof. Michael Sadler

OF the brothers Maris, Matthew is the poet, the inventor of strange fairy-tales, which carry us to realms of remote and dainty unrealities. But like his brothers Jacob and William, Matthew could view the world of real life also with something of the same sincerity that characterized his predecessors, the Dutch landscape painters of the seventeenth century. His innate sense of the decorative reigns even in so apparently direct a transcript from nature as this picture, named after the four great windmills which tower sentinel-like high above the spectator on the river's bank. The repetition of the same form in a gradual diminuendo tells with the charm and insistence of a refrain. The finely built-up composition, the great upstanding forms patterning boldly against the sky, the skilful use of figures to give life and interest to the picture, the reflections in the water recalling Vermeer, are legacies from Maris's artistic ancestors. But the high horizon, the breadth and summariness of the treatment and the comparatively rugged texture all speak to the methods and tendencies of our own day. The rich brown tones of the picture are relieved by the white houses, red roofs and a bright patch of green lawn in the centre. The picture was painted in 1871, and though bringing the artist but 100 francs, realized 3300 guineas at the Day Sale.

[*See p.* 53.

PLATE 96

SIR J. E. MILLAIS

SIR ISUMBRAS AT THE FORD

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1829–1896

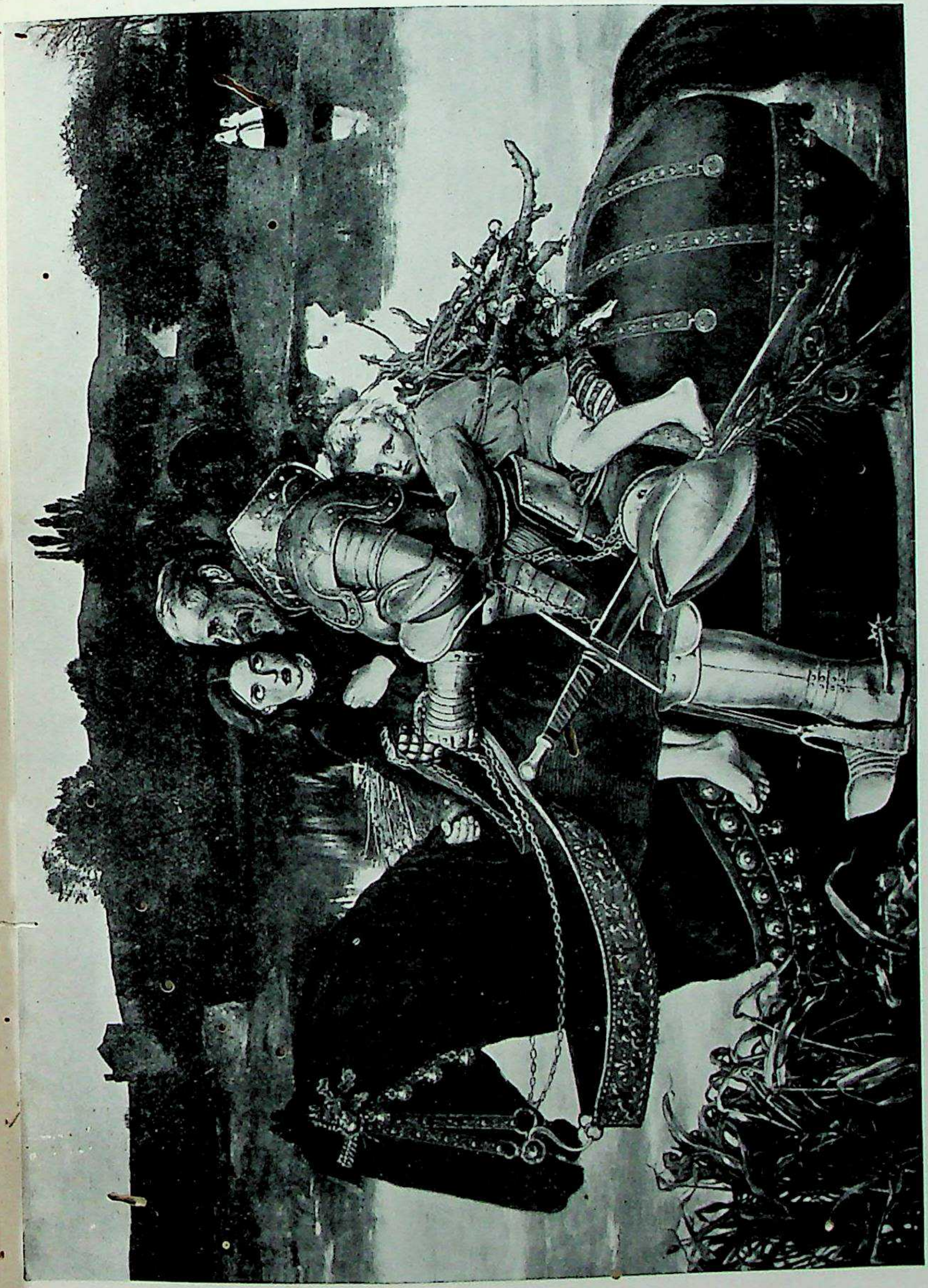
Collection of Mrs. M'Culloch
London

THIS picture, when shown at the Royal Academy in 1857, raised a tempest of abuse, mockery and satire. Amid the howls of execration Ruskin's sounded loudest. "This is not a fiasco," he wrote, "but a catastrophe." Where the great critic condemned no one dared buy. At length a mere novelist, Charles Reade, purchased it. "Either I am an idiot," he wrote to Millais, "or else it is an immortal work." The layman has proved, not for the first time, wiser than the critic.

The legend speaks for itself. A knight in golden armour, advanced in years, coming to the ford, finds there the children of some woodcutter, too tiny or too timid to cross. Placing them before and behind him on his saddle, they pass in safety.

The spirit of the picture is mediæval. There is asceticism in the kindly face of the knight, and awed wonder, as in the presence of some holy man, in the eyes of the girl, though the clinging figure of the boy, the painter's own son, is a touch of pure nature. The horse gave the artist endless trouble, being frequently repainted, while the splendidly ornamental trappings were added at a later date. The flags he planted in a tub in his studio, that he might render them faithfully.

PLATE XCVI



Mrs. McCulloch

SIR ISUMBRAS AT THE FORD

BY MILLAIS

The picture, which gives a superbly decorative impression, is conventional indeed, for its realism is of the unreal kind, which knows no subordination and attempts no truth of general effect, but delights to make beautiful every reed and rough broken stick. Yet it is a convention on which the eye loves to linger.

[*See p.* 54.

PLATE 97

G. F. WATTS

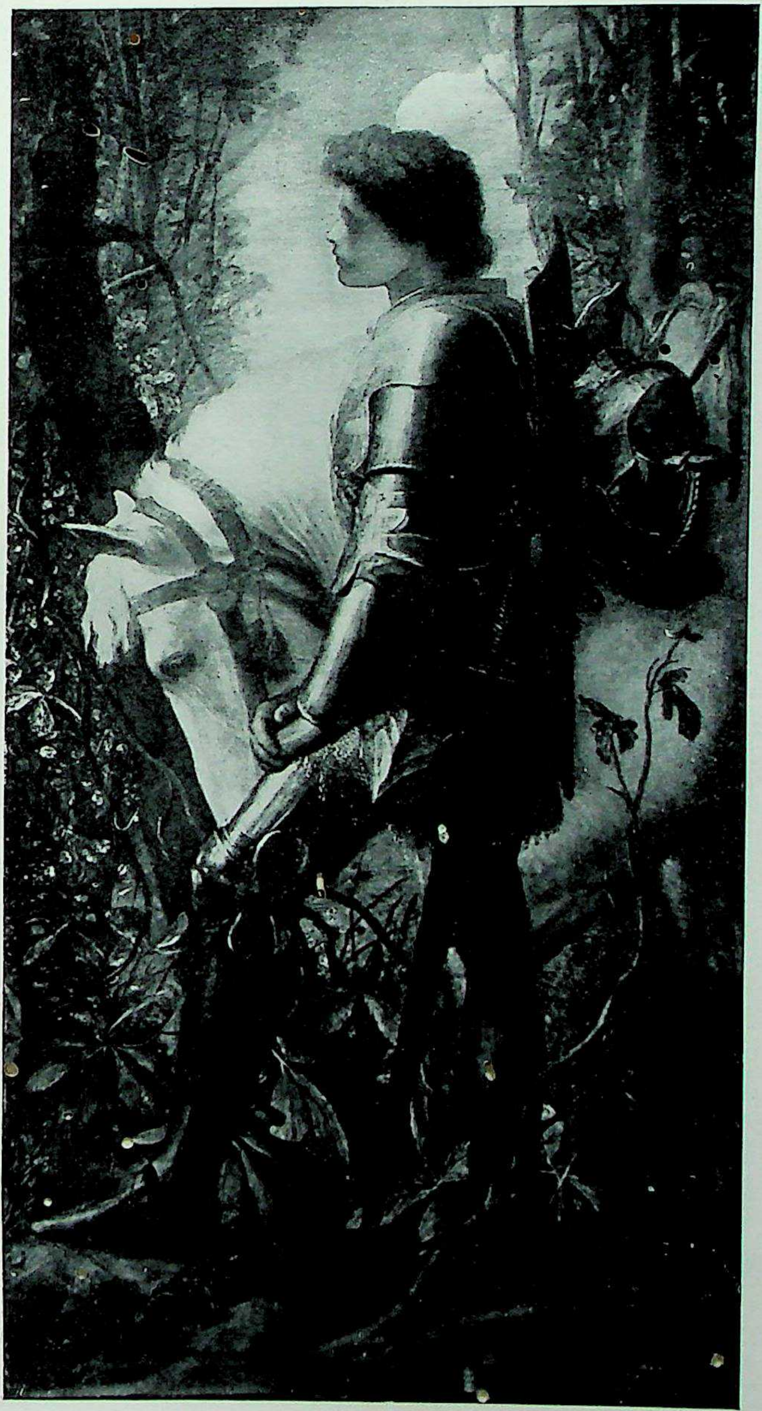
SIR GALAHAD

English School, 1817–1904 Tate Gallery

THE quest of the Holy Grail has appealed to poets and painters alike from early days to our own time. But the supernatural cannot easily be set down in terms of the natural, either in poetry or painting, a difficulty which both Tennyson and his friend Watts faced with courage and some success. Eton College is the fortunate possessor of a replica of this picture, presented by the artist himself.

Sir Galahad the Pure, riding on his quest through the forest, has heard the unearthly music of the Grail. Springing from his white charger, he stands listening in an attitude of deep reverence. The rapt expression and humility of the young knight are repeated with wonderful feeling in the powerful figure of his horse, whose bent knee follows the angle of his master's, while his trappings carry the line of the tree-trunk down through the picture. The Grail is nowhere visible, at least to other eyes than those of Sir Galahad. It is left to the imagination. The artist's restraint is the spectator's opportunity.

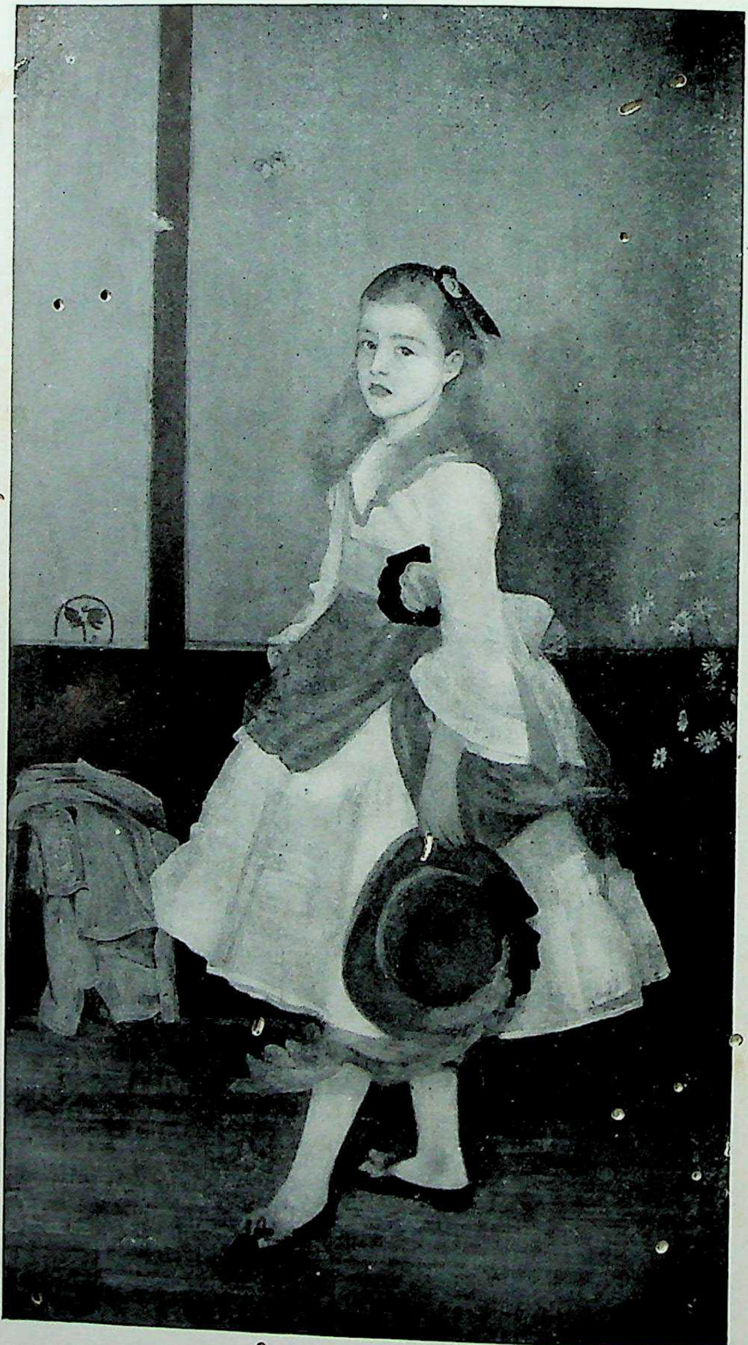
[*See p.* 54.



Tate Gallery

SIR GALAHAD

BY WATTS



PORTRAIT OF MISS ALEXANDER

BY J. M. WHISTLER

W. C. Alexander, Esq.

PLATE 98

J. M. WHISTLER

PORTRAIT OF MISS C. H. ALEXANDER

ENGLISH SCHOOL
1834–1903

Collection of W. C. Alexander, Esq.
London

ANY comment on the " Miss Alexander " should come from the pen of the painter himself. No one but the author of " Ten o'Clock " could do complete justice both to the achievement and the limitations of the picture. Its peculiar qualities of brilliant inventiveness, lightness of touch and execution and true decorative feeling are as evasive on paper as on canvas. The artist's latest biographers have recorded the difficulties that the picture gave both to the painter and to his youthful sitter, accounting perhaps for a hint of weariness in the pose so prim and demure. Elaborate directions were given by the painter as to the minutest details of the dress, and some seventy sittings were needed before he was satisfied with the manner in which he had touched in the soft brown hair, modelled the delicate oval of the face, sketched in the crisp drapery and cast about the whole its soft envelope of silvery atmosphere, impalpable as the light itself.

The apparent simplicity of the exquisitely balanced design conceals the studied elaboration and deliberate intention of every touch. The greens and greys are woven together into a perfect colour harmony, strengthened by deep notes of black in wall and dress and shoes, and subtly interwoven by lines and points of gold in the hair and shoes and in the decoratively introduced daisies and hovering butterflies.

x

[*See p.* 54.

PLATE 99

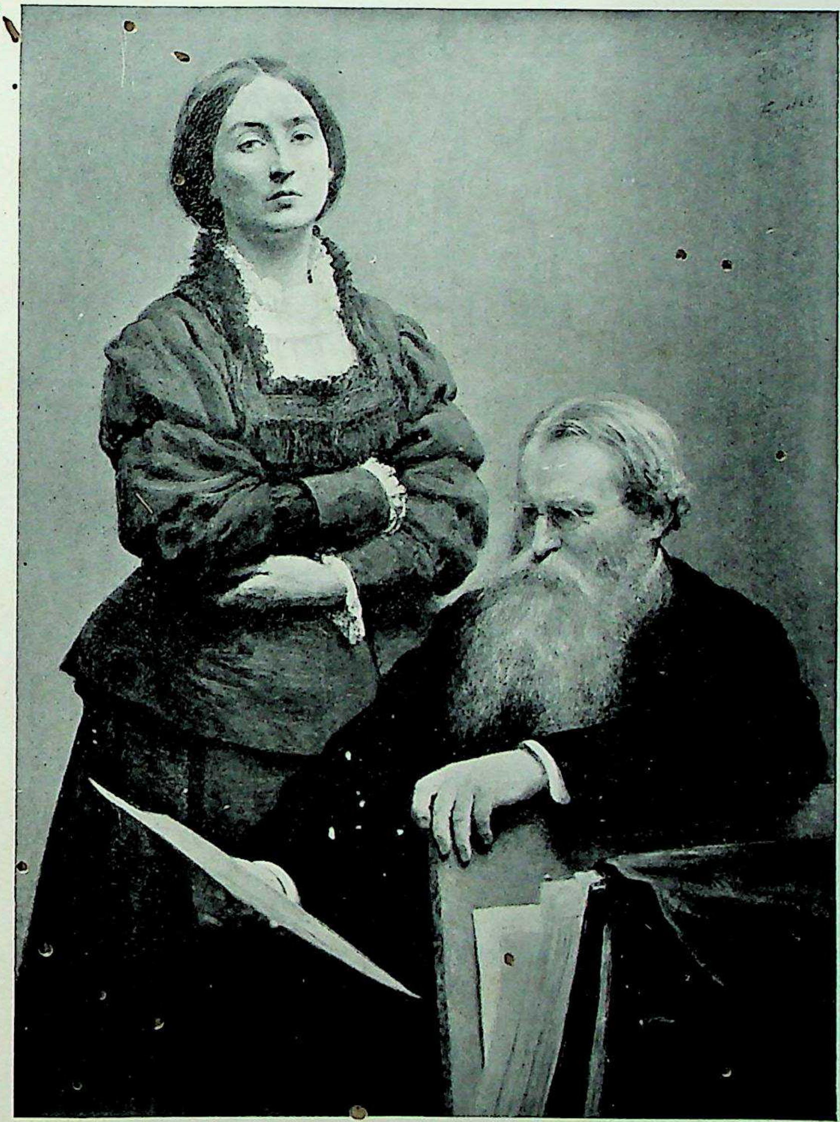
H. FANTIN-LATOUR

PORTRAITS OF MR. AND MRS. EDWIN EDWARDS

FRENCH SCHOOL, 1836–1904 National Gallery

HERE we have portraiture in its simplest, most unaffected form, yet with perfect art and striking sense of beauty. The engraver sits turning over his portfolio entirely absorbed in the print he holds in his hand. His wife stands with folded arms behind him, but more detached and conscious that she is being painted. The man's strong square leonine head with the wonderfully painted hair and beard contrasts finely with the beautiful oval of her face, which looks so steadily and serenely out of the picture. The composition unites them happily. It is strong and firmly based, yet there is no heaviness, such is the mastery with which Fantin has surrounded his figures with an atmosphere as cool as it is transparent. The background has something of the quality of Vermeer, and the delicate blue tones of the picture recall his mysteries of setting. In colour it is reticent, quiet, harmonious; greenish-greys and slate-blues predominating, relieved by a white of fine quality.

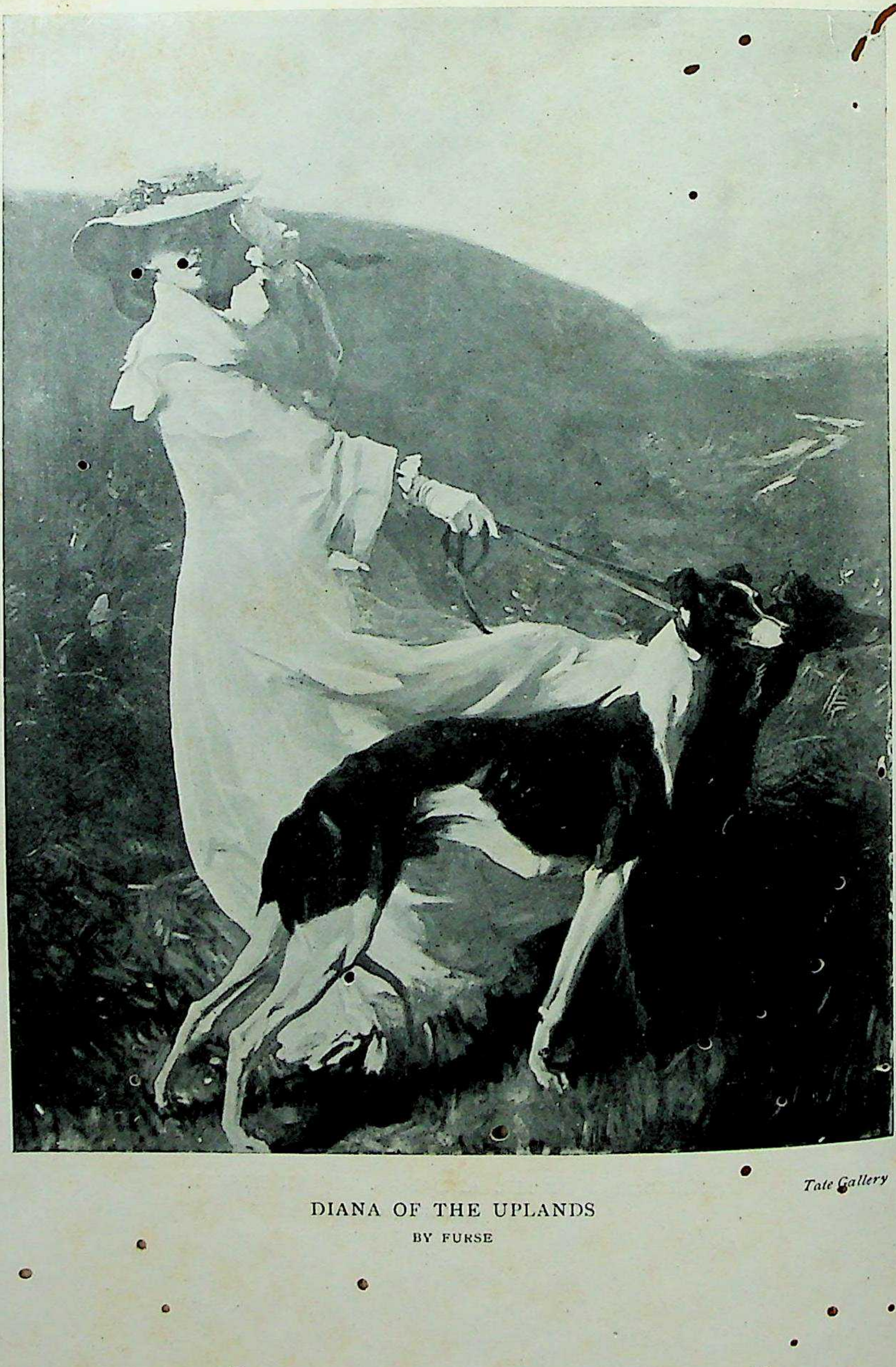
[*See p.* 55.



National Gallery

PORTRAITS OF MR. AND MRS. EDWIN EDWARDS

BY FANTIN-LATOUR



Tate Gallery

DIANA OF THE UPLANDS

BY FURSE

PLATE 100

CHARLES W. FURSE

DIANA OF THE UPLANDS

ENGLISH SCHOOL, 1868–1904 Tate Gallery

WHOM the gods love die young, and, like other English painters of brilliant prospects, Girtin, Bonington and Frederick Walker before him, Charles Furse did not live long enough to fulfil the high hopes his early achievement had raised. But even the Chantrey Trustees could discern the vigour and force of the man. His art, like his character, was large, and his work was inspired with "a certain promise of romantic beauty and grandeur," which appeals to the spectator who stands before this portrait of the painter's wife, balanced so gracefully on the wind-swept common, with her greyhounds straining at the leash. The picture, which was exhibited at the Academy in 1904, won ungrudging admiration, and was purchased for the nation shortly after.

It is instinct with life and youth, full of the strong keen air of a gusty day in high places. Its colour-scheme is cool, the brilliant whites of the cloak, painted with tremendous breadth and dash, throwing up the figure against the hillside, while the dogs sweep a telling diagonal of black across the foreground, and touches of sky-blue and a glint of red in the hat give a note of gladness to the whole.

[*See p.* 55.

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